Smithsonian

August 1988

With eyes like embers,
a black rail guards
its marshland nest (p. 38)

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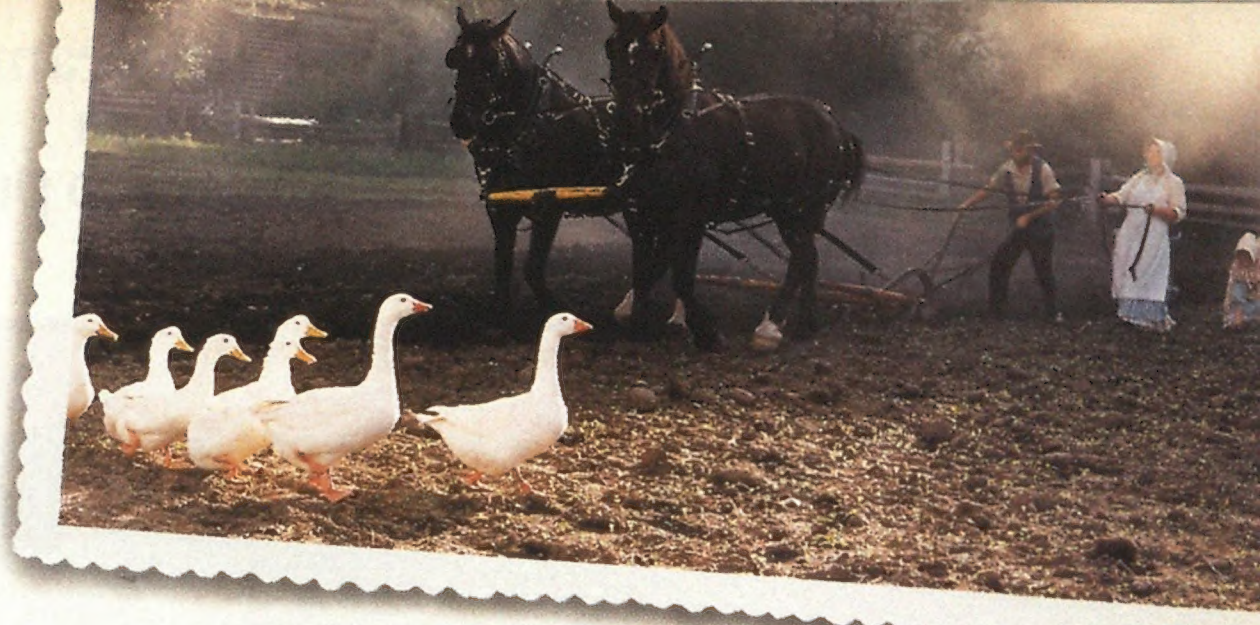

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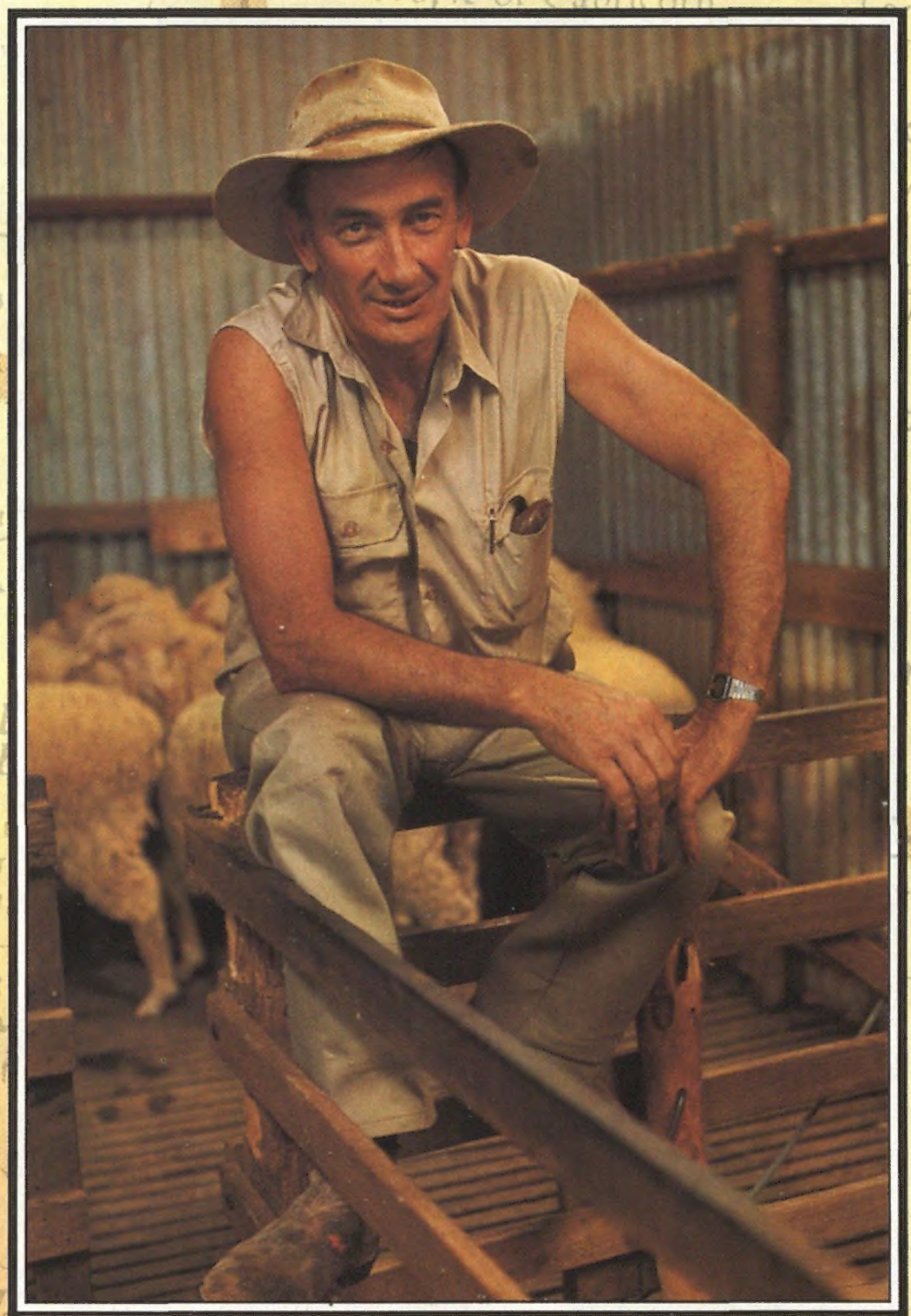

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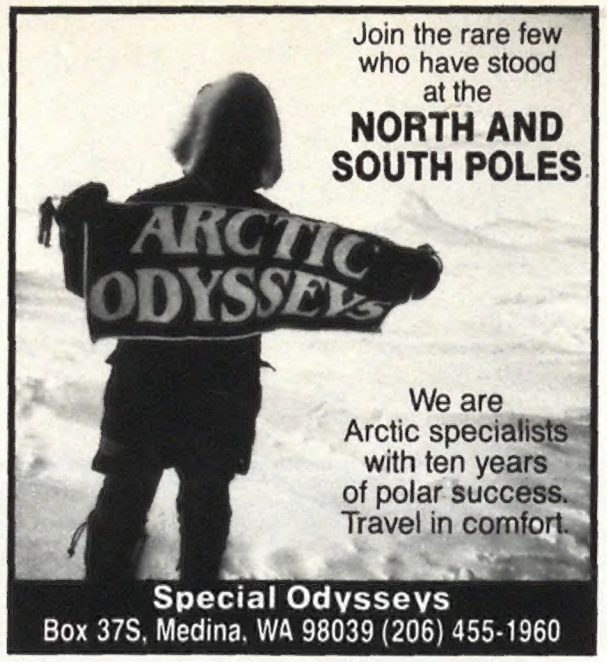
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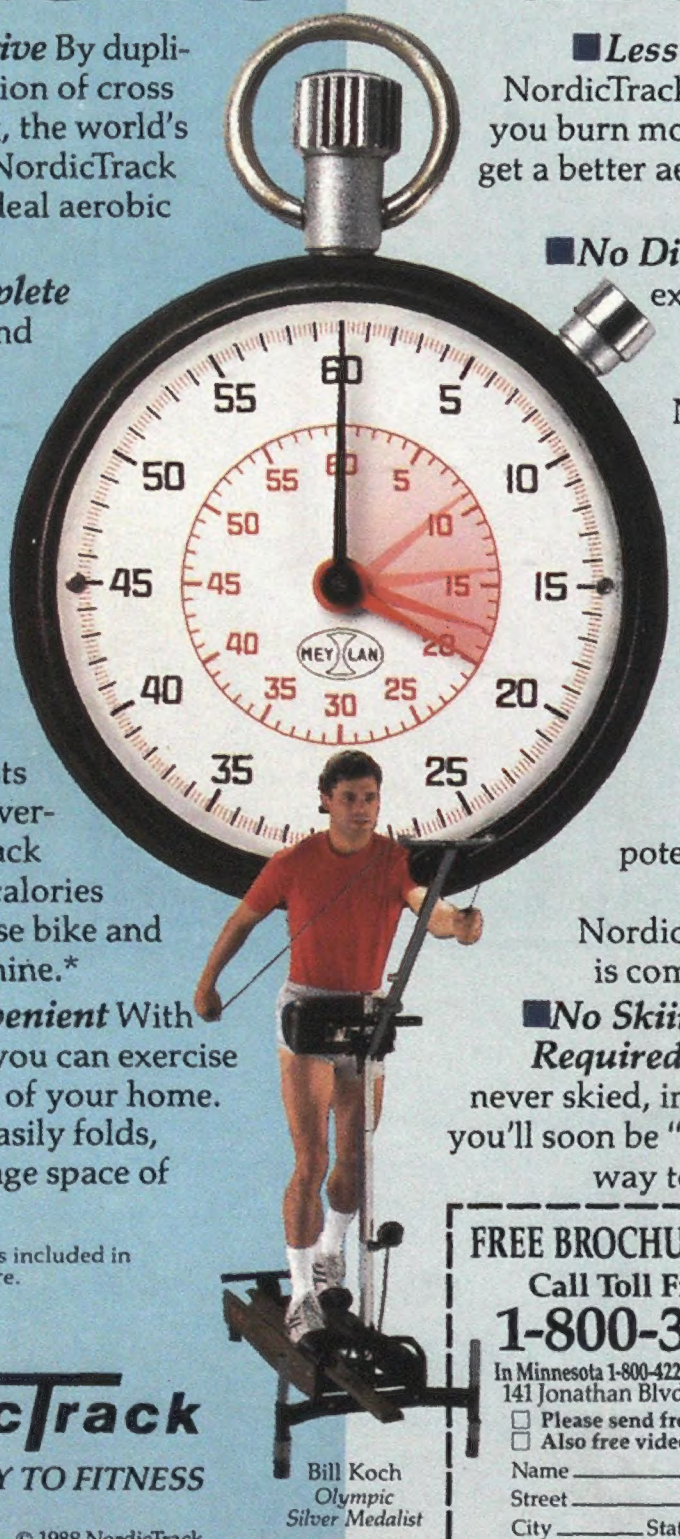

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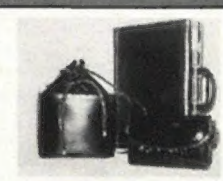

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Secretary Adams' comments

Smithsonian horizons

Conversations in East and West show a relaxation of tensions, but greater concern about the economic future

Earlier this summer I spent several weeks visiting with museum directors and other scientific and cultural administrators in Japan, Czechoslovakia, Denmark and Iceland. In each country there were useful meetings, contacts, and conversations about projects or agreements that may follow. But a few of the concerns that I repeatedly encountered overshadow what is more directly relevant to the Smithsonian. Perhaps this is because they testify to the heartening interconnectedness and commonness of outlook, but also to the prevailing rigidity and fragility, of the world we are living in.

One almost universally recurring sentiment was an expression of pleasure and relief at the relaxation of tensions between the great powers, which has lessened the possibility of catastrophic military confrontation. But it is the side effects of reducing this last, never very real, threat (in the eyes of those I visited with) on which attention was primarily focused. These include anticipations that features of authoritarian rule like censorship, arbitrary limitations on education and choice of employment, and restriction of the rights to emigrate and travel freely, must presently begin to wither with the decay of the rationale for them. Extension of democratic rights thus becomes a valid, if in many cases still qualified and distant, target of thought and discussion. As new opportunities for contact between rival social systems arise, there is a growing awareness of an emergent cosmopolitanism of profession, leisure, style and taste.

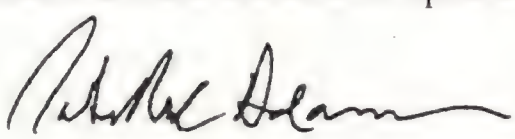
With this rebirth of hope and movement, however, has come a puzzled sense of diffuse but threatening economic forces that also operate on a worldwide scale. Gains in competitiveness, productivity and technological innovation, coupled with the massive improvements in education needed to attain these ends, may be clear enough as national objectives. Unmanageable deficits, indebtedness, inflation and imbalances of trade are the corresponding dangers to be somehow avoided. The informed public recognizes, however, that policies that will simultaneously pursue or control all of these eventualities will be difficult to find and painful to implement. An increasingly threatening economic future is glumly foreseen. I encountered a prevailing pessimism, in other words, that increasing vulnerability and a diminished ability of national political organs to control a country's destiny are likely to accompany the greater individual freedom and international interconnectedness that are in prospect.

Unwelcome choices and trade-offs seemed on the verge of becoming the dominant preoccupation of my informants. Stresses within the European Economic Community have by no means been eliminated. Iceland, outside but contemplating entry, weighs the corresponding cost of a loss of exclusive control of its fishery resources.

Japan, which we perceive as holding unmatched economic advantages, is troubled by the narrowness of the base of its highly competitive high-tech industrial sector, and by the backwardness and inefficiency of its internal distribution networks. Even the Czechs, reticent about all their difficulties, and positively opaque on the eventual impact of glasnost and perestroika, acknowledge concern for badly lagging productivity and obsolescent industries.

An especially painful feature of these gloomy economic circumstances is their impact on the world's arts and sciences. In field after field a golden age of possibilities can be envisioned, a product of accelerating new discoveries and methodological advances. Yet in very few cases can past rates of increase in funding be maintained any longer. Not infrequently there have been substantial cutbacks, and more are probably unavoidable. Research, having become a major national expense and priority, in country after country is being weighed against social programs and other competing commitments. Improvements in the political climate thus stand in ironic contrast to the shrinking horizon of practical possibilities. An older set of restraints, easy to stand in opposition to, gives way to a new one that is not.

All creative fields are affected, the sciences in particular. An atmosphere of intensified competition, bickering and mutual suspicion is one unfortunate result. Dr. Frank Press, president of our National Academy of Sciences, has called upon his colleagues to reduce the public airing of internal dissensions. He urges them to set their own priorities, while taking necessary limits on spending and competing public interests fully into account. His own proposals would maintain the stream of trained individuals and small-scale projects, as well as support work on national crises like AIDS and on important breakthroughs like that in high-temperature superconductivity. This may postpone the attainment of the furthest reaches of human vision, but it reaffirms the essentially human standards of value that must undergird all publicly supported arts and sciences enterprises.



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Letters to the Editor

Chimpanzees

Dear Sir: Dash's attack on Janis Carter, recounted in the June issue, reminded me of a somewhat similar, although not physically threatening, experience.

In the Philippines during World War II, a tiny macaque became my constant companion, ate what I ate, slept with me in my mosquito-netted Army cot.

When my unit, the 1294th Engineer Combat Battalion, was ordered home following V-J Day, I had a problem. I could not take my monkey with me. However, I felt it was my duty to do what I could for my little friend.

Since he had always enjoyed going into the jungle with me and playing hide-and-seek, I searched the nearby forest for a group of macaques, thinking they might adopt him. When I spotted a group, I released him under their trees. He scrambled away and I left, hoping he would survive.

Several days later he bounded into my tent, jumped on my shoulder, grabbed a fistful of my hair in what seemed affection, then helped himself to a banana. He carried the fruit, almost as big as he, up the nearest tree to other primates, presumably those to which I had introduced him. Days later he returned, but this time he just grabbed a banana and went back to the trees. On later visits he bared his teeth and opened his mouth. The last time, he took the banana, bared his teeth, made a grunting sound deep in his throat and threatened me by arching his back, fluffing his hair and swinging his tail from side to side. That made me happy.

But what was most fascinating was the obvious communication that had developed between this juvenile and the monkeys that sent him to my tent. The fruit was always taken away from him by one of the other macaques.

Lewis F. Okenica
Lawrenceville, New Jersey

Giovanni Belzoni

Dear Sir: Brian M. Fagan's *Rape of the Nile* discloses that while Belzoni was busy with his affairs, his wife, Sarah, often lived with native families, traveling about in Egypt and Palestine accompanied only by a servant. To avoid detection by a xenophobic local population with strong biases against women appearing in public, she disguised herself as a young Mameluke boy—remarkable in the early 19th century!

James A. Buzard
Cincinnati

George Eastman's Kodak

Dear Sir: Just as the Great Depression was getting under way, in 1930, the Eastman Kodak Company announced a promotion that provided a happy experience for half a million boys and girls in the United States, and another 50,000 in Canada—at a time when happy experiences were in short supply.

In celebration of their Golden Anniversary year they would give a Brownie camera and roll of film to every child in the United States and Canada whose 12th birthday fell in that year. I was delighted with mine and used it (buying countless rolls of film) until I went away to the Navy in 1940. I wish I still had it. Simpler to use than any camera I have had since, it took great pictures.

Ira Dye
Virginia Beach

Dear Sir: The circular snapshot of George Eastman reproduced on page 107 was taken aboard the Cunard Line's 4,800-ton steamship *Gallia,* built in 1878. He was a passenger in 1880 when Fred Church "Kodaked" him on deck.

Incidentally, the "canal" shown in the snapshot on page 112 is not of Venice but of the basin of the Court of Honor at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. At left is most of George B. Post's immense Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, 747 feet in length and at the time the largest building in the world.

Denys Peter Myers
Alexandria, Virginia

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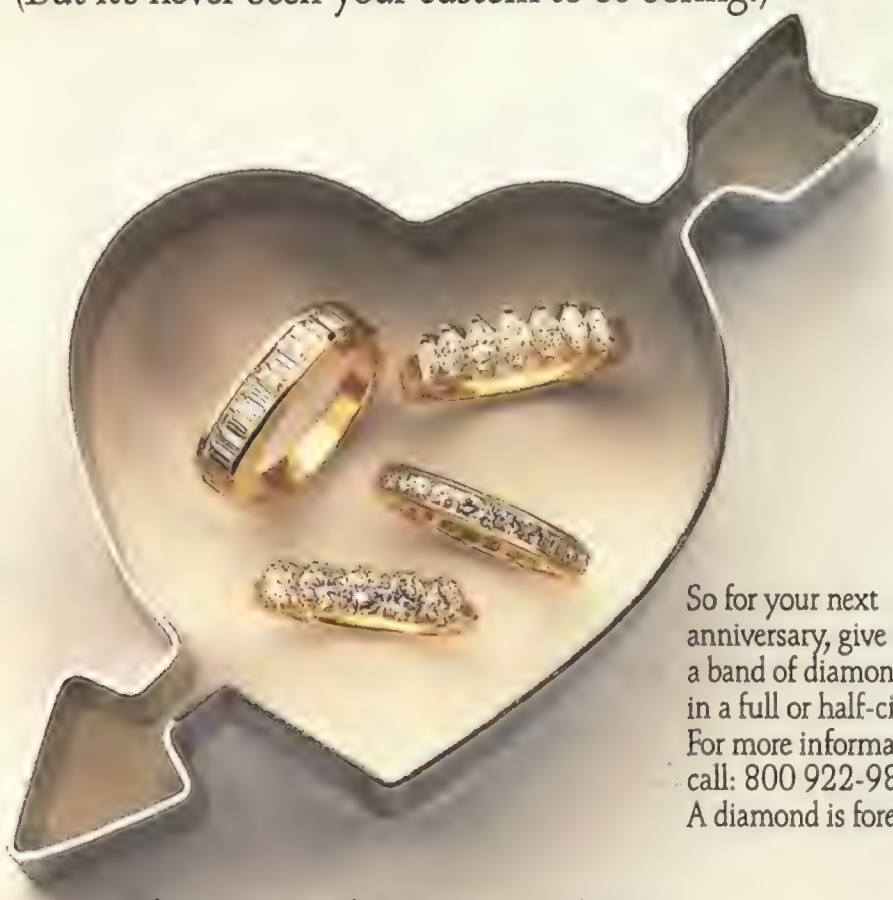

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ARTCARVED
SINCE 1850

Dear Sir: During my college years in the 1920s, at a luncheon in Mr. Eastman's home, I was seated to the left of our host and ventured to ask why his famous camera was called "Kodak." He replied: "Well, if you'd really like to know, here is the answer. One evening I was served a dish of alphabet soup and as I came to the end of the bowl, I saw five letters facing me. They were KODAK, so the question of what I should call my camera, which had been occupying my mind for some time, was immediately solved."
Margaret Truax Dougan
Santa Barbara
George Eastman seems to have had as many explanations for the name of his camera as there were inquirers, but this is one of the more novel. Ed.

Legoland

Dear Sir: As a father currently enjoying a second childhood with scores of Lego blocks ostensibly bought for my son, I can vouch for their addictive quality. There were very few different pieces when I was a boy, but now, each time my son passes a toy store I see the need to acquire all 1,200 types.

To me, the most endearing feature of these toys is the happy face on all Legoland people. Even the driver of the Blacktron "Alienator." Opening the visor of this black-suited warrior and seeing the smiling face is akin to unmasking one of Darth Vader's Imperial Troopers—only to find Luke Skywalker peeking out from his disguise.
Jerry Sonnenberg
Melbourne, Florida

'I need a list . . .'

Dear Sir: My mother was an inveterate list-maker throughout her nearly 91 years. We grew to dread helping her when we came back to the farm for weekends, as her lists contained such items as: "paint barn, fence farm, plant lower 40, harvest tobacco. . . ."

One morning as I sat watching her finish her daily list, she smiled with satisfaction and drew a line through the first item.

"Mama," I said, "how could you accomplish something just sitting here?" Then I looked over her shoulder. She had just lined out the first two words: "Make list."
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I borrowed an original from a friend, a retired mailman who, like thousands before him, was kind enough to test it out, for years, on the tree-lined streets of small towns everywhere. Before you were born.

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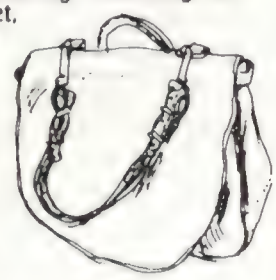

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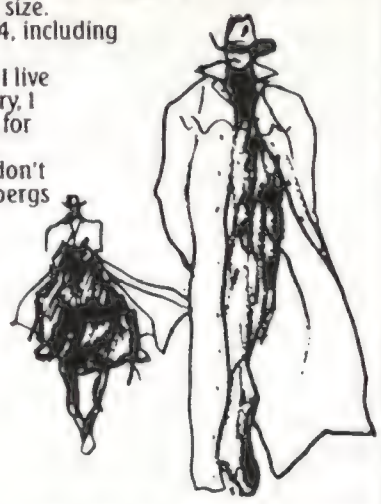

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Around the Mall and beyond

American Golden Topaz, 6.9 inches long, is world's heaviest faceted gem.

"Big Gem Day" was one of those events that I am allowed, only grudgingly, to attend. Guards at the Museum of Natural History's Gem Hall eyed me with more than usual coolness before stepping aside. Entering, I touched my unaccustomed necktie to make sure it was really there.

The Institution was about to accept an honest-to-God superlative: the heaviest faceted gemstone in the world (above).

It's a golden yellow topaz, cut so that its table—the largest flat surface—is almost square and roughly four inches on a side. From the table, the stone's facets slope out to the girdle—the broadest dimension—which is pretty nearly six inches along the longest edge. From the girdle, the stone tapers to a shallow point as gems do when they are "cushion cut." Picture a modern automobile headlight, with lens, and you've got an idea of the shape of this monster.

Not many headlights, however, weigh 10.1 pounds—or in jeweler's terms, 22,892.5 carats—the record-breaking heft of this new acquisition. That was why gem curator John Sampson White was throwing this special bash in the normally hushed confines of the Gem Hall.

The great yellowish stone had pride of place, a table set up like a small altar at the center of the far wall. The museum had arranged some chairs to face the gem, and in a moment of madness I sat down, then realized that Smithsonian colleagues were glancing at me uneasily. The seated congregation comprised only outside guests; I inched my way out to stand in a corner where I belonged.

The outside guests were, in fact, mostly members of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. It sounded pretty formidable until, in the course of introductions, I realized that these people were just good old rockhounds, the avid amateurs who scour the land for that occasional, beautiful, often valuable reward: garnet, perhaps, or tourmaline; augite or quartz. Or possibly corundum, which might turn out to be a ruby or a sapphire. Or even a 26-pound topaz crystal, which this great gem had once been.

It was found, like much topaz, in Brazil—a rough, waterworn chunk, but of such fine gold-yellow color that a rockhound couple, the Borgattas, bought it from a dealer in the early 1970s. Ed Borgatta, a sociology professor at the University of Washington, saw that the stone could be made into a giant cut gem. A skilled cutter himself, he roughed out the way it should be faceted. Then, lacking the equipment, he turned the crystal over to a cutter named Leon Agee, of Walla Walla, Washington. Agee started cutting in September 1985 and finished two years later. His equipment broke down for some months, so you can't really call it a two-year job.

In the fall of 1986, the Borgattas called John Sampson White and asked if the Smithsonian would be interested in acquiring the finished stone. White is cursed with a low budget and blessed with a hearty competitive streak. In 1985, he had missed getting the huge Brazilian Princess Topaz, then the world's largest cut stone, which went, instead, to the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Since he hates to lose, he was determined not to let this record holder get away.

That's where the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) got into the act. It raised several thousand dollars to help finance the acquisi-

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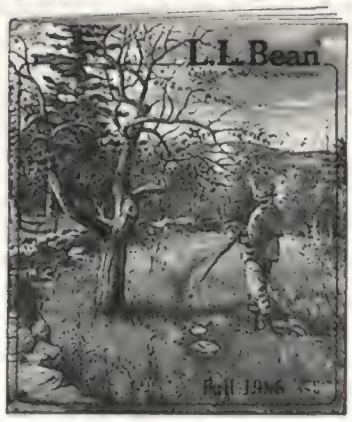

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PRESTON'S 67-W Main St. Wharf
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tion. The stone, says White, is its gift to the nation, and in its honor now bears the name American Golden Topaz. It is 1,500 carats heavier than the Brazilian Princess. And it's also prettier than the pale blue New York giant, White adds, his loyalties firming up.

The shimmering rock glitters with varying flashes of light as you move your head from side to side. I did that, from my corner, and suddenly found my eyes on a dark stone mounted in a case behind the big gem. What's that little guy? I wondered to myself. And then with a flush of shame, I realized that it was our icon of icons, the Hope Diamond.

During the outline of the new gem's history, I'd pulled up short at the description of cutting a 26-pound stone. This I couldn't picture. So, on the advice of John White, I made an appointment to watch a well-known and highly respected cutter at work.

I'd expected to meet a gnarled old craftsman with square spectacles, grinding away at the rear of a jewelry shop. Instead, I found Sean Sweeney, a 30-year-old with pretty good eyes, who keeps in shape by running and works at his home in a Maryland outer suburb of Washington. I parked beside his Honda, and he led me into a converted downstairs bedroom, where he closed the door against the intrusion of household sounds from his wife, their 6-month-old son and their dachshund.

"I'm working on a topaz now," he said, pulling a cardboard box out from under one of his two desks. It held several colored rocks, raw and shapeless. He found a bluish stone, rough and crystalline. "You can tell from the shape," he said, "that it's got to be an oval."

I could tell no such thing, but didn't know him well enough to admit it.

"First I put it on the dop," he said briskly. I didn't speak the language, but he selected a short brass rod and waved it toward me. Smeared with a highly adhesive brown wax, it holds the stone at one end. The other end fits into a chuck on the arm of a faceting machine. Its adjustable arm holds the dop at preset angles so that the stone barely touches the spinning lap, or turntable, which does the "cutting"—really grinding.

I watched Sean put about 60 facets on that stone, shaping it as he worked. With a veteran's knowledge of the angles he needed, he'd twist the calibrated wheel, then press the topaz against the whirring lap. I pressed the stone myself to make a facet. You have to push quite hard.

And so, in just the course of that morning, I watched what had seemed an impossible metamorphosis—an awkward blob of stone turning into a faceted, polished gem.

"Some of the finest cutters," he told me, "are amateurs—hobbyists. They have the time and the equipment. Not that this is bad," he added quickly, holding up his gem. "This is good work."

According to an article in *Gems & Gemology*, to which I was referred by Sean, you need a table saw to start in on a boulder like the Smithsonian's, and laps maybe 16 or more inches in diameter. And of course you must counterweight the mass of the stone when you lower it on your faceting machine.

No wonder our huge topaz caused equipment breakdowns, and took all those months to finish as compared to one morning's work (plus lots of chatter) for the little jewel that Sean Sweeney (and I!) fashioned.

I believe that a lady now wears ours. But the American Golden Topaz resides in—and dominates—a special case in the Gem Hall called Gemstone Giants. Go see it. You really don't need a necktie. Or catch it when it's on tour at AFMS shows across the country. And if you come to the Gem Hall, be sure to look for another new acquisition—a 5.03-carat round-cut red diamond. There are only five documented red diamonds in the world, and this is the largest on public display. Also, the fancy yellow diamond that at 407.43 carats ranks as the second-largest cut diamond in the world (SMITHSONIAN, May 1988) will be a guest in the hall from August 1 to September 13.

Edwards Park

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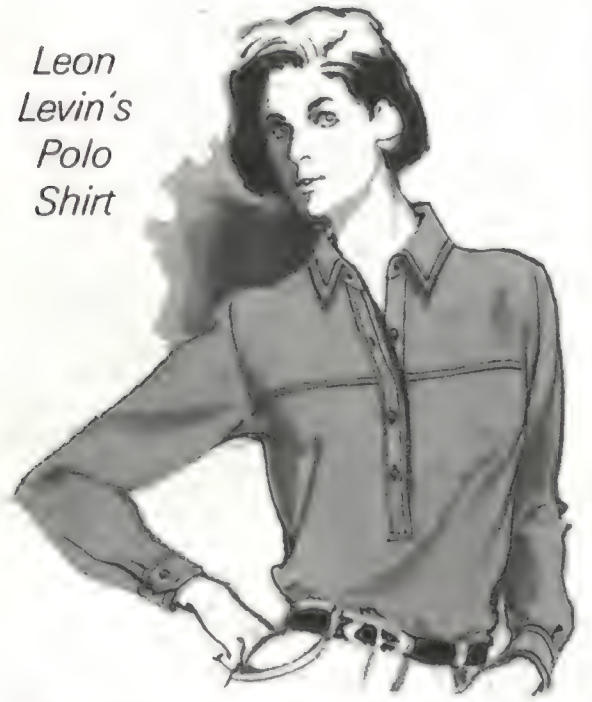

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Phenomena, comment and notes

Part of farm machine abandoned as unfixable is routine challenge for Willie.

A sociologist finds a living definition of workmanship in a man who keeps things running beyond their time

When we talk about science stories around here, we normally mean "hard" science—physics and astronomy, molecular biology, stories that involve a mechanical universe and plenty of photogenic hardware. Occasionally we will slip over the line into anthropology, even into contemporary urban anthropology, but never as far as sociology. This stance is partly a matter of ignorance, but also, in my case, prejudice. The one college course I took seemed to consist mostly of arbitrary definitions, generalizations and incredibly arcane ways of stating the obvious.

A recent issue of *Scientific American* unsettled my complacency. There was MIT physicist Philip Morrison favorably reviewing a sociologist's study of a repair shop in upstate New York. The book is *Working Knowledge: Skill and Community in a Small Shop*, published by the University of Chicago Press. The author is Douglas Harper, an associate professor of sociology at the State University of New York College at Potsdam. The hero is a man named Willie, a mechanic who embodies the very ideal of Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, a man whose skills span 2,500 years of human history. The irony is that this man can exist only in a region of grinding poverty, outside our consumer society.

In a special way, the author is a neighbor of the hero. As he points out, "It is not enough to live within ten or fifteen miles; to be neighbor to Willie you have to behave in a way that is routine in the shop but sometimes mysterious to outsiders. A person becomes a neighbor by passing informal tests, but you generally don't know what the tests are or whether you have passed until the time comes to ask for help. . . . An exorbitant offer of money or a promise to do better next time you have a chance to repay a favor will not bring Willie out on a cold night. When you ask for help the chips are cashed in. If you have paid your dues—if you are a *neighbor*—Willie will come, and he will stay until the problem is solved. For these jobs no money is exchanged. The most important work, ironically, is not sold but given."

Willie fixes Saabs, farm machinery, cedar-oil stills, well-drilling rigs, sawmill engines, plumbing, electrical systems, "machines and dwellings that are in ill repair, improvised and makeshift." The Saabs he usually works on are not the status symbols of today's young professionals but the older cars, "inexpensive and long-lasting, pragmatic and ugly; suited for rough roads and cold weather." When he needs a part he takes it from one of the wrecks outside the shop—or he makes it. He redesigns as he repairs: if the door handle on a particular model fails frequently, Willie designs and builds a different mechanism that will not.

It takes more thinking to fix something than it does to make it in a mass-production world, Harper argues. Makers are now machine tenders, turning out one small part in endless repeti-

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tion, knowing and needing to know almost nothing about the ultimate product. The repairer does need to understand the larger picture. Harper writes that even this distinction will fade, however. "In a typically rationalized repair, a mechanic removes a part of the machine thought to be defective and puts another in its place. Because automobiles are owned for fewer years, the work of replacing parts is not complicated by rusty bolts or deteriorated mounting brackets. It is a simple procedure, detailed in manuals. The defective parts are seldom repaired. In fact in many of the components (particularly the ignition systems) of modern cars, internal elements are sealed and impossible to fix."

Willie's understanding of metals goes back to 500 B.C., to the first blacksmiths who learned to work iron into weapons and implements. (Harper points out that although we customarily think of blacksmiths as farriers, horses were not shod until about A.D. 900.) Willie's father was a blacksmith who gradually moved into auto repair, and Willie's training began at the very beginning. He can still do a blacksmith's weld.

As Willie puts it: "In a manner of speaking the blacksmith was a machinist. Everything was molded and drilled. When it came to farm machinery, when you had a broken part . . . you'd get your metals to a certain temperature and then put the two pieces together and hammer them. You'd hammer them right back into one piece."

Harper compares Willie favorably with a type of person found in primitive societies whom Claude Lévi-Strauss called a *bricoleur*, a person who makes use of "odds and ends, the bits left over, the set of unrelated or oddly related objects." Above all, according to Lévi-Strauss, such a person thinks through a task: "Consider him at work and excited by his project. His first practical step is retrospective. He has to turn back to an already existent set made up of tools and materials, to consider or reconsider what it contains and, above all, to engage in a sort of dialogue with it, and before choosing between them, to index the possible answers which the whole set can offer to his problem . . . .

"The rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand,' that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it con-

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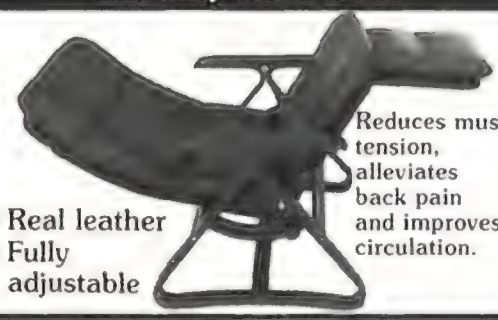

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Why does Willie keep on, using scraps no one else wants to fix things no one else will work on? He is most certainly not getting rich. Relations with his customers can be complicated and unpleasant. He is frequently in pain from an injury incurred while working on the St. Lawrence Seaway (he could collect disability but does not—he would rather be working). Harper thinks the essential element is neither Willie's knowledge nor the responsibility of being able to keep so many farmers and other neighbors going. Instead, Harper contends, it is what Thorstein Veblen called the instinct of workmanship—to "seek realization and expression in an unfolding activity." As Veblen put it: "The instinct [of workmanship] may be in some sense . . . concerned with the ways and means of life rather than with any one given ulterior end. It has essentially to do with proximate rather than ulterior ends. . . . Efficient use of the means at hand and adequate management of the resources available for the purpose of life is itself an end of endeavour, and accomplishment of this kind a source of gratification."

Whatever the grand theories, Willie goes on. He is installing an old gasoline-storage tank as part of a solar hot-water heating system, and a wind-powered generator with blades of his own design (cut from 55-gallon drums) that produce even pressure on the central shaft. His own Saab has begun its fourth hundred-thousand miles. But the de-skilling, the disabling that cause the worker alienation sociologists love to write about is catching up to Willie. The new cars are too complicated even for someone with his skills. And instead of keeping their old machinery running, farmers trade it in for new to receive the best depreciation allowances and investment credits.

Garages have always intimidated me because of my total mechanical inadequacy. Now a sociologist, of all people, has taken me inside and shown me what workmanship can mean. It's time for another look at sociology—and time to mourn the passing of the *bricoleur*.
John P. Wiley jr.

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By Helen Dudar

Where even Cubs fans go to linger over Monet and Dubuffet

The ever-popular Art Institute of Chicago with its recently remodeled galleries and new building is vying for crowd-pleasing shows

Rembrandt's regal *Officer with a Gold Chain* returns the thoughtful look of an admiring viewer.

Scarcely a decade ago, the Art Institute of Chicago was in a dramatic state of disarray. Glorious art hung in conspicuously dingy surroundings. The skylight ceilings were beyond repair and on wet days buckets were set out on gallery floors to catch the drips. The lobby, "modernized" in the 1950s to mask a lush Beaux-Arts decor, exuded all the freshness of a suburban bus terminal. And security was a wan joke: paintings were sometimes stored in a broom closet. Four days short of the museum's centennial year of 1979, someone temporarily walked off with three Cézanne oils.

The most telling absence was the lack of a strong hand at the helm. The last director had died in 1977, and for two and a half years the board of trustees seemed unable to find a candidate willing and qualified to replace him. In the memory of one local loyalist, it was Chicago's time as "Sleeping Beauty."

Something more than an awakening kiss is wanted to breathe new life into a somnolent art institution. In fact, it has taken nearly nine years and has required a willingness to confront old mistakes—as well as the spirit to find $57 million to recharge the enterprise. The visible results are compelling. The restored lobby, grand staircase and galleries went on display in May 1987; what the public saw were not only sumptuously revived spaces but an installation of European art memorable for its logic and purity.

The second act will be played out next month with the launch of the South Building, the latest addition to a sprawl of connecting structures, among them the Institute's highly respected art school. The new building increases the total exhibition area by 33 percent and provides a great hall, half the size of a football field, for special exhibitions. In this era of the museum as grand opera, Chicago is prepared to compete for the really hot shows, for heavy media notice, for clots of ticket holders jammed elbow-to-elbow before priceless works of borrowed art, trying hard to savor them.

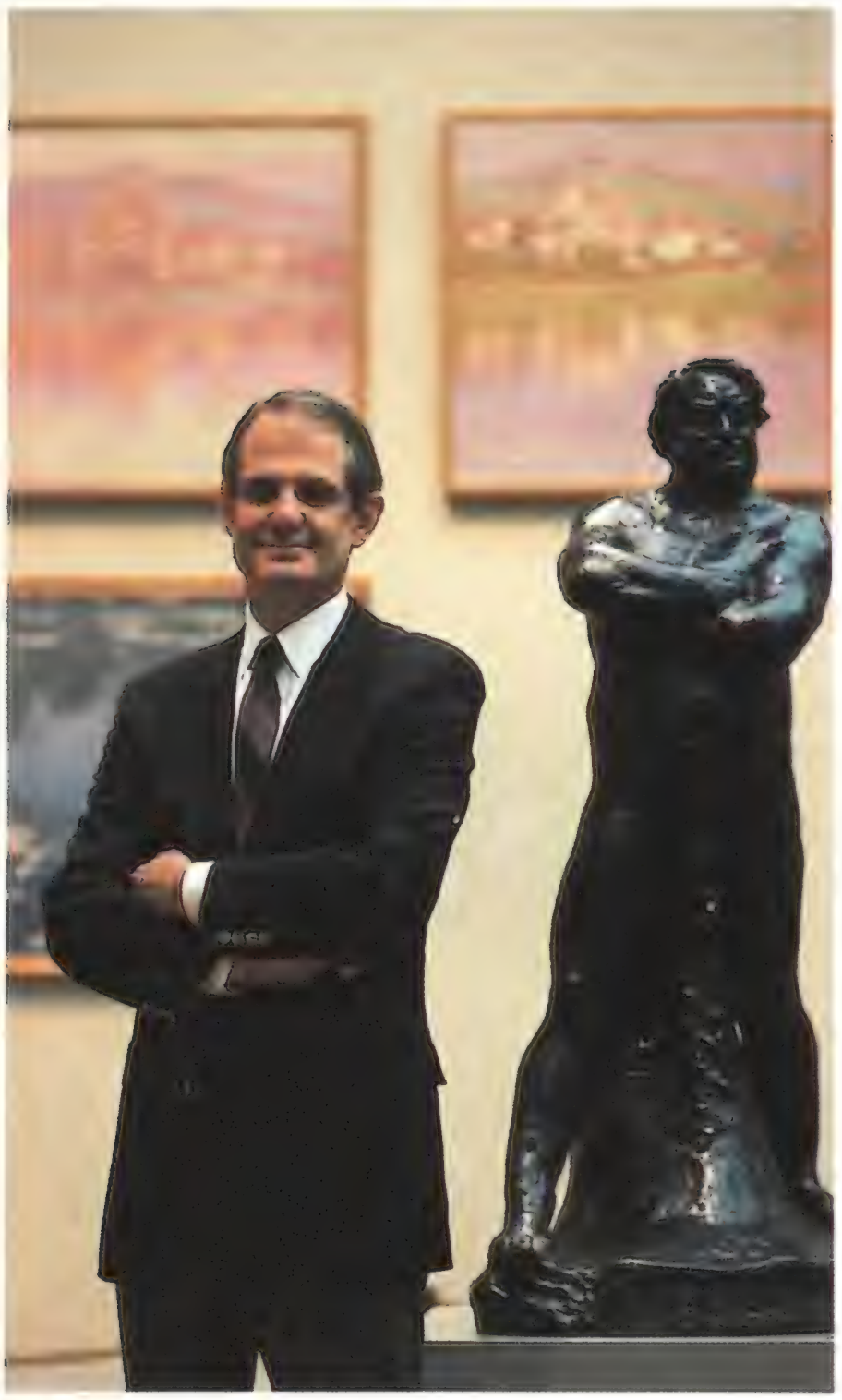
It is a measure of his self-confidence that the new director, James N. Wood, serenely acknowledges ambivalence about some of this. Wood landed in Chicago in 1980, one of the new museum breed of formidably dynamic scholar-leader-diplomats whose very presence energizes and transforms old places. He was not yet 40 and had five years as director of the far-smaller St. Louis Art Museum in his immediate past.

In hardly any time at all, the Institute was on the way to remodeling and building and buying more art,

Marshall Field stands calmly among frenetic museum visitors on the restored Beaux-Arts grand staircase.

Photographs by Robert Frerck/Odyssey

Great art in the heartland



In company with Monet's oils and Rodin's *Balzac* is scholar-leader-diplomat, director James N. Wood.

and part of the increasing, mostly young curatorial staff was at work on a five-year effort to put together the special exhibition that opens the new building. Assembled in concert with two other museums, it is the biggest Gauguin survey since the 1906 Paris show (SMITHSONIAN, May 1988). Since Gauguin is a familiar artist—familiarity enhanced through Anthony Quinn's film portrayal—the show is, moreover, a guaranteed crowd-pleaser. Pleased crowds are expected.

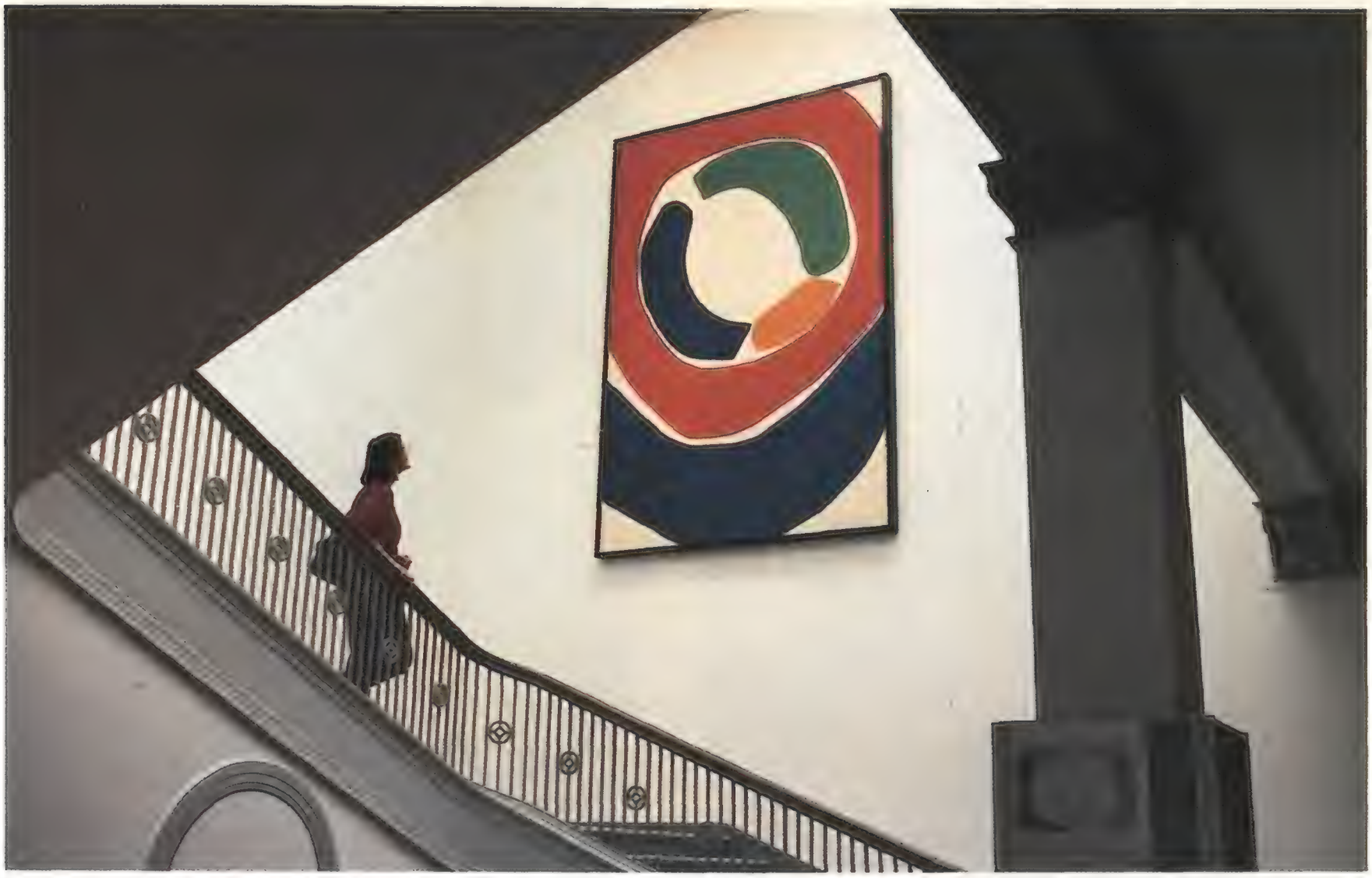
In a sunny, agreeably cluttered office, Wood ponders the prospect. He sits at his ease at a coffee table within sight of two current favorite works that neatly sum up the sweetness and stress of life in the modern art world. One painting is a sunny Paris street scene by Bonnard, the other a harrowing portrait by Ivan Le Lorraine Albright, the Chicago master of human decay.

Today's bustling museum, Wood says swiftly, operates under a built-in dilemma: How to relate individual works of art to a large audience? On the one hand, you must allow large numbers the chance to experience great work in a kind of personal relationship. On the other hand, you must control the flow of visitors to make sure the crowds never reach a point at which the personal relationship is diminished. "If you don't try to attract a broad audience, you're not even attempting to provide for a large, democratic population" and, he notes with quiet relish, "if you don't have the dilemma, you're probably failing—at least in a major museum."

Oddly, self-doubt about how major it is seems to afflict the place like a persistent cold virus. "People here worry all the time about what people on the outside think of us," one staff member commented. A conversation with Marshall Field, the president of the board, does not jar that judgment. The first Marshall Field, a local merchant of note, was a signer of the Institute's incorporation papers. The fifth, a slender, smiling man who has been on the board for 22 years, tends to business in the afternoon, and every morning, with ID card dangling over a conservative tie, goes to work in a small, windowless office in the Institute.

Setting his sights on third place

Field worries about nearly everything, including money: "We run very, very slim budgets. All our curatorial departments are short. You put us up against the National Gallery or the Metropolitan Museum, we look terrible. We feel we're trustees of the public money and we think we can get the job done for less. My feeling is the Art Institute should be the number three museum in the country. I'll give to the Met and I'll give to the National Gallery, but I won't give to anybody else. We are the third. Philadelphia doesn't have enough and Boston is too conservative. But we could lose it. Los Angeles is spending tons of money to



Born in Snovsk (1962) by Russian émigré Jules Olitski caps off a visit to the second-floor galleries of East Wing, where the 20th-century-European painting and sculpture collections are now located.

come in. Who knows what the Texans will do? Every day I try to exhort the troops."

In the interests of economy, Chicago does not originate major touring shows, although it will cooperate in organizing them. While the museum has been criticized for this lapse, Field is proud of it. "It drives Mr. Wood crazy. But we save a ton of money and a ton of agony with all the people you need to organize it."

Not long ago, the trustees were looked on—at least by some of the city's art community—as a small, exclusive club: remote, insulated and hostile to anyone who did not share a lineage of old family names and old money. Periodically, a local collection would land in the hands of a distant museum, but nobody on the board seemed to grieve. Then, one day, the trustees woke up to headline news that Muriel Kallis Newman had committed her holdings, worth upwards of $12 million, to the Met. "A tragedy for the city," Richard Gray, the stellar dealer in contemporary art, called it.

The decision to alter her will had been made in 1979 when Mrs. Newman decided the work belonged in New York, a city she loves. What she did not say was that, for reasons she is too polite to detail, she was too unhappy with the way the Institute had been run to give it her art. John Maxon, the former chief, had been a difficult man who inspired high degrees of love and loathing; to this day, the in-house term for inharmonious installations is "Maxonized." Maxon was gone, but in 1979 Mrs. Newman had no reason to believe his successor would be an improvement. She is a remarkable woman with a remarkable collection, much of it acquired more than three decades ago during a four-year period. An aspiring artist, she began visiting New York in 1949, discovered and met the artists of the New York School, and started buying canvases with great excitement and acumen. Pollock, Kline, Motherwell, Rothko—their works came into her hands for sums as low as $800 and never higher than $3,000.

Mrs. Newman's decision saddened a great many people, among them the late James Speyer, the Institute's gifted curator of 20th-century art, who at once ceased to be her good friend. Still, in Marshall Field's view, "That was the best single thing that could have happened to us. Now, I'm in a minority here. The majority of the trustees were surprised, maybe horrified. But it woke everybody up to the fact that we had better—pardon me—get off our fannies."

The average visitor to this Michigan Avenue establishment is unlikely to care greatly about any of these internal sorrows. Perhaps because Chicago is the only

Helen Dudar writes often on museums and those who run them, such as the Metropolitan (May 1987) and the Smithsonian's new museums (September 1987).

Dorothy Rauch, one of the Art Institute's 95 docents, discusses Renoir's *Two Sisters* with schoolchildren.

Schoolboy bends close to search for tiny dabs of hot orange among the dots in the green-and-blue grass.

major art institution serving a rather large Midwestern region and is thus their first experience of a great art establishment, the inhabitants tend to see it in a special light. "We get the same people for special exhibitions," according to one staff member, "as those who go to Cubs games." At some point in an extended visit, someone in the place will tell you without exaggeration: "People *love* this museum."

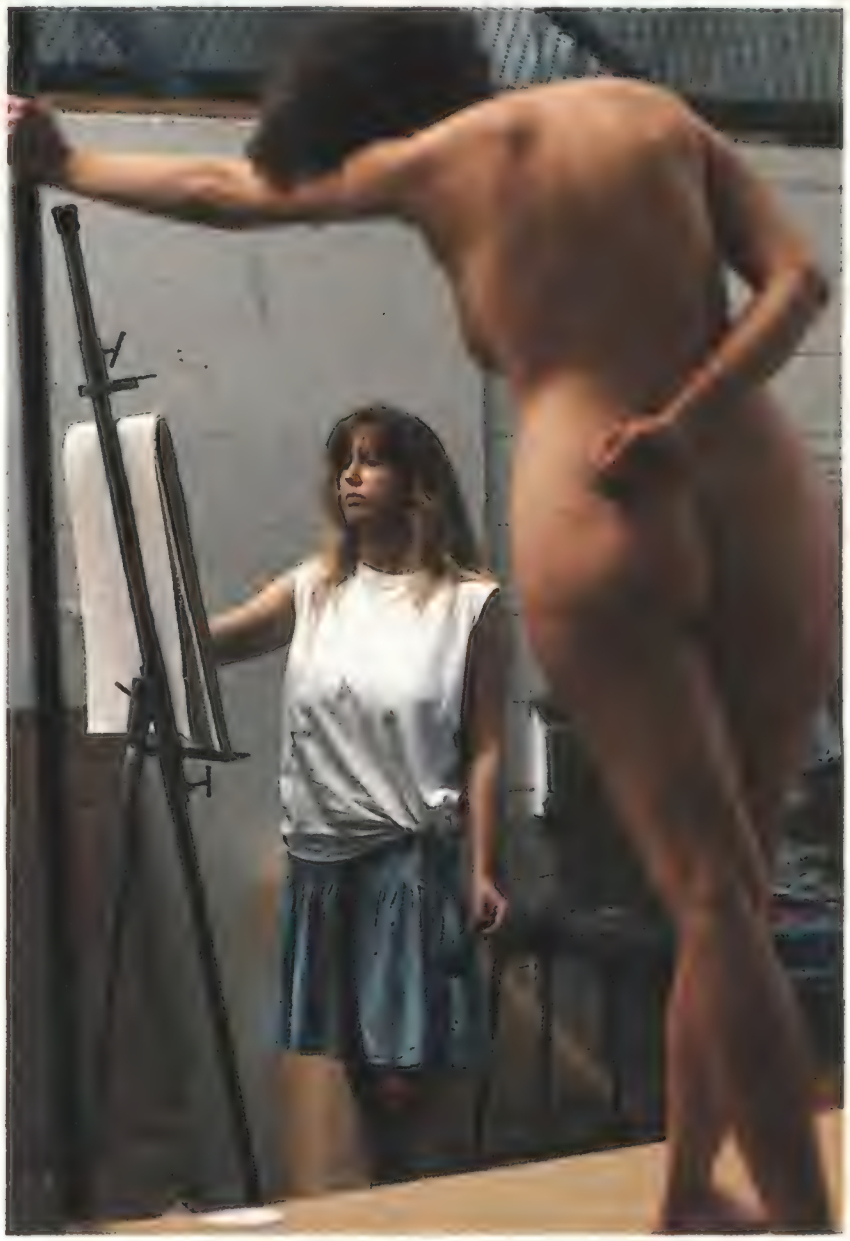
As with any lasting passion, the fervor is not entirely rational. A few years ago, Katharine Lee, the deputy director, says, the administration sponsored an audience survey that, among other questions, asked 2,000 visitors to rate the museum. "Fifty-three percent of the people questioned said the Art Institute was second to the Louvre. Obviously it's not true, but this is the feeling, the kind of loyalty of the region."

One likely reason for the attachment is that, after an absence, the rich display on the walls is nearly always a rich surprise. Almost from the moment a group of local merchants, lawyers and bankers incorporated what they initially called the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts—the name was changed three years later—the museum has had luck attracting patrons with both money and a daring instinct for spending it on good things.

The core of the early European collection began on the wealth and refined tastes of a lumberman and lawyer named Martin Ryerson. In 1890, on a European tour, Ryerson, vice president of the Institute, and his friend Charles Hutchinson, the president, heard that some of the great art remaining in the collection of Prince Anatole Demidoff, a Russian émigré, was for sale. Although much of his hoard had been dispersed, his widow still held a few dozen prizes.

The two tourists sped to Florence where they chose 13 Dutch and Flemish paintings at a cost of about $200,000. Among them: the Jan Steen *Family Concert, Young Girl at an Open Half-Door* (a thing of beauty, although the Rembrandt attribution is now in doubt) and Hobbema's *Wooded Landscape with a Water Mill.* The cargo sailed into New York to be greeted with sneers. One contemptuous journalist imagined the Chicago citizenry staging a welcoming procession with

In Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte,* he learned, orange makes light flicker.



At drawing class, art school student Naomi Rotwein concentrates on her interpretation of nude model.

floats "drawn by teams of milk white Berkshire hogs . . . newly washed . . . until their pink flesh shows."

Eastern provincials cling to disreputable imagery for the heartland's metropolis: it is forever America's hog butcher and the cradle of high-yield mobsterism. In the words of one native son, Nelson Algren, who conducted a lifelong love-hate affair with Chicago, the city is, indelibly, "Hustler Town." If the name is merited, then art was surely hustled on a grand scale.

Around the time Ryerson was buying Old Masters, the supremely social Mrs. Potter Palmer, whose husband built the Palmer House, was snapping up modern paintings. In a two-year period, she acquired 29 Monets and 8 Renoirs. Some of the works would form the nucleus of a collection of Impressionist and Post-impressionist art that is internationally famous.

There was a kind of serendipitous fortune to the way Chicago found friends. One year—1923—the trustees gave Frederic Clay Bartlett his late father's seat on the board. The next year, Bartlett, an artist and collector who had never been adventurous in either effort, bought what is perhaps the Institute's most famous piece, Georges Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte,* a prelude to other purchases that would include a Picasso, a Cézanne and a van Gogh.

By this time, the museum's curators were developing what is euphemistically called a "commitment to donors," a craft also known as cultivating big givers. Carl Schniewind, a brilliant curator of drawings and prints, used to escort a pair of wealthy ladies to Paris for annual shopping trips devoted to masterworks, apparently encouraging a benign competition between the two. His enterprise helped to build a treasure of works on paper that now numbers 68,500.

A variant of that technique helped flesh out superb contemporary collections. The legendary Katharine Kuh, the museum's first curator of modern art, would offer her expertise to Chicago collectors in exchange for, say, a Picasso here, a Dubuffet there. "I'd travel with them or meet them in Paris," she recalls, "and in return for advising them about their own collections, pick out paintings for the museum within a certain price

At home, Gerald Elliott, who walled off a lake view for art's sake, sits under a Joel Shapiro sculpture.

From his lofty perch, art "addict" and top collector Lewis Manilow surveys a portion of his accumulation.

range. I think when I came we had about two paintings by Picasso. I think when I left we had 17 or 19."

Now 84, Mrs. Kuh has been gone from Chicago for nearly 30 years, but she has never lost touch with the museum. She had run a gallery in Chicago until World War II came, and when she arrived at the Institute in 1942, her taste had already been damned as "leftist" by a local critic. It was merely ahead of the times.

A woman who thrives on controversy, Mrs. Kuh, with the support of the Institute's director, Daniel Catton Rich, talked the trustees into letting her acquire a great de Kooning work, *Excavation*. "They didn't like it, they didn't want it. They said we could have it but don't hang it for a few years." She hung it at once. Another time, a fierce local public outcry followed her purchase of a late, major Jackson Pollock. "Kuh-kuh must go," raged one city newspaper.

She did, in 1959—to become art editor of the *Saturday Review*—and she was part of a serious exodus that followed Rich's resignation. About 20 curatorial employees left around that time; the causes were manifold, but one of them appears to have been a board of trustees once rather delicately judged to be "excessively proprietary," which translates to "high-handed." There followed two decades in which Mrs. Kuh, among others, believed the museum was either standing still or moving backward. In her eyes it has zoomed forward in the years since James Wood's arrival.

The Institute's art school, one of the three biggest in the country, has been an arm of the museum from the beginning, and a nesting place of such celebrated alumni as Georgia O'Keeffe, Robert Indiana, Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton and Claes Oldenburg.

There are obvious advantages to studying at an art school next door to a great museum. Ed Paschke, a Chicagoan who got his training there, says the impact was considerable and lasting. As a student, he would often cut classes "because the museum was more interesting. The Impressionist collection had a great influence on me. There's nothing to compare with the opportunity to view original works of art, to see the sequence in which things were done, the layers of paint. I learned a great deal."

Paschke stayed in Chicago and developed a painting style that brought him international as well as local fame. When an Institute staff association wound up with $100,000 in profits from the sale of some popular T-shirts, they spent part of it on a big, red-hot Paschke head, *Caliente*, for the modern collection. Like others in the art establishment, Paschke has sometimes struggled with the impulse to leave, to move East to New York where power in the art business dwells. "I play this game with myself, where I ask myself, 'What if I had gone? What if I were to go now? Would I be better off?' " But he stays in a state of mild, occasional conflict. He is, logically enough, distressed to be labeled a

It includes Julian Schnabel's *La Spiaggia* (above). Manilow says Chicago collectors are "good and tough."

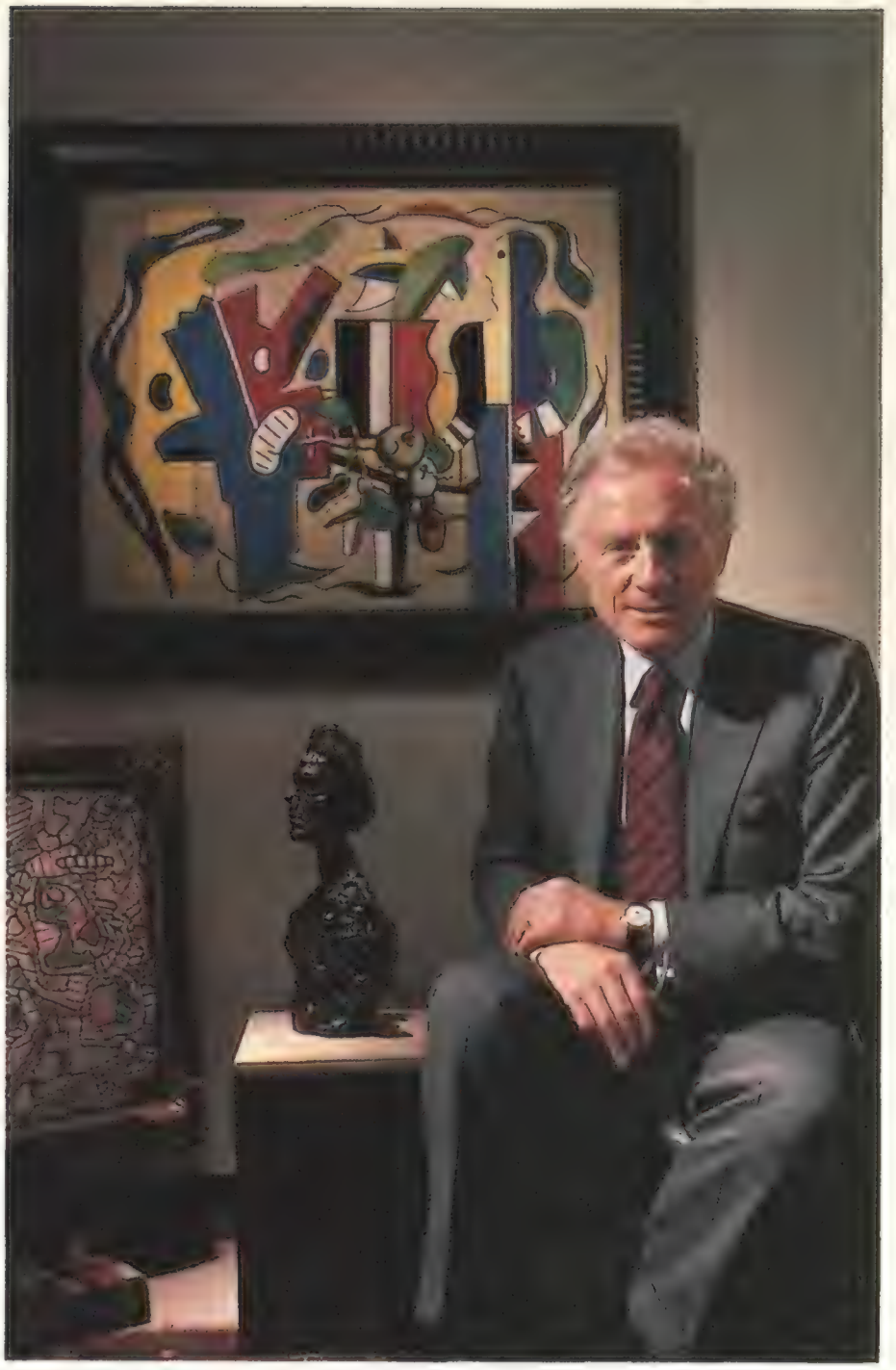
Chicago artist. "I think of myself as an American artist." Still, he says, "I feel very Chicago."

Chicago has become a more comfortable city for artists with its flowering of interest in the contemporary art scene. The city now has a smallish but active Museum of Contemporary Art and a crowd of collectors who race around the country to catch important shows. They fly to Europe to buy the works of Anselm Kiefer and Gerhard Richter, and are proud that they were doing so before these new lions were even shown in the East. They are partial to words like "tough" in describing their energies; as Lewis Manilow, an art "addict" puts it, "I like to think we're not only good but tough collectors."

Although they frequent New York for the latest shows, Chicago collectors resolutely remain Chicagoan. "It's a city that's rational, livable and calm," according to Gerald Elliott, a small, gentle man whose apartment would have commanding views of Lake Michigan if he had not walled off a half-acre of glass in order to hang big contemporary paintings.

"There is a sort of camaraderie among collectors here that, as I understand it, doesn't exist in many cities," he says. "We're all friends. We talk about what we buy and we travel together to shows all over the world. If someone has bought a painting [that the others wanted], we say we're glad it's coming to Chicago."

Richard Gray, probably the seminal modern-art



Renowned modern-art dealer Richard Gray opened his first gallery near Michigan Avenue 25 years ago.

Artist Ed Paschke often wonders "Should I stay or should I go?" but remains a staunch Chicagoan.

Art handlers install a new exhibition on early Chicago architecture, featuring Daniel H. Burnham.

dealer in the city, the man who shows David Hockney, Jim Dine, Louise Nevelson and George Segal, opened his first gallery just off Michigan Avenue 25 years ago at a time when, he estimates, there were no more than a half-dozen others in town. Now, the number is close to a hundred, some on Michigan within walking distance of the Institute, many more clustered around an old warehouse neighborhood called River North. Its main streets are Superior and Huron, and in a mocking salute to New York's SoHo art district, it is less formally known as SuHu. Its success can be measured by the complaints of older inhabitants now suffering rent squeezes caused by the usual invasion of chic little boutiques selling the newest status jeans.

This year *Art and Antiques* magazine's annual list of the nation's top 100 collectors includes 11 in Chicago and environs, among them Manilow and Elliott. Gray calculates there are at least two dozen more, owners who are more secretive about their holdings but no less obsessive about adding to them.

Probably, some of this privately held art will one day be added to the 250,000 objects the Institute already owns. Meanwhile, what is on display and, more particularly, how it is shown in the restored main building are something of a triumph. Over the decades, the core galleries of the original museum building, which was opened in 1893, had been drastically altered: corridors were closed or converted into offices, new walls went up, old walls came down, moldings were stripped. One of James Wood's first acts when he arrived in Chicago was to hire an architect to turn out drawings that would show the original layout.

The offices that ringed the galleries, he discovered, had been created by carving up corridors that once moved visitors from room to room. When he looked at the original layouts, Wood saw the opportunity for a rare kind of installation. Museums can seldom show paintings and works on paper in the same space because the light requirements are so different. A painting needs to be washed in light from above; drawings and watercolors and prints, fragile and prone to fade, must be kept in low light.

Restored and appropriately illuminated, the corridors of the renovation have become small galleries hung with works on paper that are directly related to the adjoining big rooms. The results are a feast, and immensely satisfying—a chance to move between swift scrawls that might represent, say, the beginning of a Canaletto Venetian scene and the finished painting itself.

The Institute's renewal was two years away from completion when work began on the South Building designed by the Chicago firm of Hammond Beeby and Babka; its principal is Thomas Beeby, dean of the Yale University School of Architecture. In the Chicago of Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright and Miës van der Rohe, in a city where architects have always been more famous than artists, the museum has nervily tramped down a new path. As everybody there likes to say, "We are not making a statement with this building."

No, they are not. The Institute complex embraces a range of styles, but the dominant building remains the handsome museum designed and built during the years before and after the turn of the century by the Boston firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge. Rather than compete with its Romanesque arches and ornate surfaces, the architects chose to echo them faintly. With its pale, cool, limestone sheathing, and restrained window and doorway frames, the South Building is—there seems no other term—chaste. With its skylit sculpture courtyard, it will also provide great spaces for European decorative arts, for a fine collection of American arts, and for 20th-century painting and sculpture.

On the whole, the new structure approximates the kind of building the museum's trustees and director had in mind. Nobody, Wood said, wanted a radical new style or a highly sculptural abstract form. Nobody expects that his approach will find universal favor. "If everyone likes it," Wood mused one day, "it's probably mediocre." And what if everyone hates it? Wood laughed. "If everyone hates it, it's conceivable that we made a mistake." One way or another, he expects the formal opening to be an occasion for debate, even hostility. He looked as if he could hardly wait.

For some, beholding great works like Grant Wood's classic *American Gothic* (1930) is a new experience.

Opposite: At home in a brackish marsh, a king rail keeps its clutch of eggs securely covered—almost.

Lured close by recording of male's mating call, black rail (above) attacked the photographer's tape machine.

By S. Dillon Ripley

Revealing the secret lives of the little phantoms of the marshes

Rails would rather walk than fly, but they are so elusive that you can count yourself lucky if you see one

A good number of years ago when I was an early rising teenager, I would take a canoe out, sometimes before dawn, in the country where I lived in Connecticut. Up the river and down my friends and I would go, haunting the stretches where the canebrakes and fallen willow trees, brush and marsh vegetation gave promise of finding birds. Yet in all this time afield, I almost never saw a rail.

Though not uncommon, rails are perhaps the most elusive birds on the continent. The rail species of the United States are still little-known today, and virtually nothing was written about rails as a family until my own monograph appeared in 1977. That volume contained fine illustrations by J. Fenwick Landsdowne, but rails had rarely been captured in photographs—at least not in good ones. Then, two years ago, William Burt arrived in my laboratory carrying the extraordinary photographs that appear on these pages. His project—to record with his camera all six varieties of North American rails—ultimately required some 14 years to complete.

The only rail that I managed to see during my school and college days was the clapper rail, which is found in coastal California and along the Atlantic coast from southern Canada to Florida and the West

Photographs by William Burt

At left, a Virginia rail sits tight on a carefully concealed nest. On hatching, active chicks will run about even before their down is dry. Above, larger clapper rail stalks tidal flat. Once extremely abundant, clapper populations were severely reduced by hunting in the 19th century. The sora (opposite) is the most widespread of the North American rails; like others of its clan, it will often swim, rather than fly, across a body of water.

Indies and on into South America. Standing more than a foot high, it is the largest member of the family. This gray-brown, streak-backed bird occurs in two forms, the king rail found primarily in inland freshwater swamps, the clapper rail proper in brackish estuaries or on saltwater flats.

One can sometimes see clapper rails out in the open on the salt marshes, especially at low tide when they strike out from the tufts of grasses to probe the mud flats for buried mollusks and to pick up insects of various kinds. While they are magical in their ability to conceal themselves when they are in the grass or low brush, when they do emerge into the open they seem to disregard the fact that they are exposed, and behave the way they would if they were in cover. In contrast to other long-legged shorebirds that live in the open, such as curlews or sandpipers, which scuttle or fly rapidly away at the slightest alarm, members of the rail family may even saunter along the side of a busy highway, as did a sora rail I once saw in Florida. These birds that are usually closeted in underbrush, then, behave as if they were still secure even at times when they can be readily seen.

I remember rounding a curve in our Bantam River one morning and surprising a Virginia rail, a small, long-billed rail of our New England wetlands, that was marching confidently across an open flat. To my amazement, it was soon followed by three diminutive fluffballs, the newly hatched chicks. Really, each looked like a tiny meatball banded with fluff, impossibly skewered on a pair of toothpicks that rapidly vibrated as the chick fluttered after its mother. When she saw us, she gave an alarm call, "kid-kid-kid-ic, kid-kid-kid-ic," and ran off at a rapid pace. Any other mother bird would have flown, but the rail, characteristically, rushed off on foot.

Curiously, rails seem to hate to fly, and when they do they fly only a short distance, with long legs dangling behind them, and then suddenly flop into the grass. One can sometimes run rapidly after a flushed rail and find it crouching or playing dead in the very spot where it fell—thus they are sometimes trapped by humans and, I suspect, more often by short-eared owls or other predators who learn their ways.

Even smaller than Virginia rails are the little black rails, which stand perhaps five inches high. They are mouselike creatures, rarely seen, and so are normally known only by their call that rings through the marshes on spring nights, a "kick-kerr" sound repeated so incessantly that it can be as inconducive to sleep as the buzzing of mosquitoes.

These tiny birds are quite aggressive, their calls and wheezy chatters interspersed with hoarse rattles and vigorous "foot stamping." One can just imagine these

S. Dillon Ripley is the Secretary Emeritus of the Smithsonian Institution. Author of Rails of the World, *he has studied the birds from Guam to New Guinea.*

Overleaf: Defending its nest, a king rail spreads its wings and puffs up its feathers in an aggressive display.

On encountering the rarely seen yellow rail (left), Audubon remarked on the "extraordinary power of contraction" that enabled the bird to thread its body through the marsh vegetation. Indeed, these birds can make themselves "thin as a rail." Opposite, nearly hidden by a canopy of overarching grasses, nest of king rail on page 38 is revealed: a count of ten.

little creatures, tails cocked erect, rushing hither and thither in tiny mouse runways in the grass, frightening off not only mouse- or shrew-size enemies but also rival males. Sometimes the displaying male will spread its wings and hiss—the whole activity so extraordinarily intense that one thinks of other minute creatures like shrews, whose aggressiveness seems to be in inverse proportion to their size.

Perhaps the most secretive member of this secretive family is the yellow rail. This enigmatic creature is not much larger than a house sparrow, about seven inches long but standing only about three inches high. Its inconspicuousness is suggested by the fact that the first yellow rail nest was not found in North America until 1915. Only about five inches in diameter, the cunningly hidden nest is built in tussocks of marsh grass or cutover hayfields.

Rails are obviously more clever and successful as ground-nesting birds than has been thought. Yellow rails, for example, may build as many as six mock nests before actually selecting one, thus perhaps confusing potential predators. And the female may lay as many as ten eggs—quite a production for a mote-size mother. Yellow rail chicks have well-developed wing claws, which help them to clamber through vegetation, and they are able to fend for themselves by the time they are 3 weeks old.

Though rails seem to prefer walking to flying, they can fly as well as other birds and they do migrate—the yellow rail, for example, may fly each year from southern Canada to the Gulf Coast and back. Yet many rails seem to migrate at random rather than follow a specific migratory route like other birds. Some species have irruptions: individuals or groups suddenly turn up on oceanic islands thousands of miles away from their normal migratory path. Rails—or their fossil remains if extirpated in the past by predators—have been found on most midocean islands and the farthest reaches of continents. Behavior of this kind is virtually unique in avian life, and my own theory is that these irruptions allow them to colonize and to start new populations in more remote and isolated parts of the world.

While such behavior may seem ill contrived, how fortunate it is that these birds are so adaptable. Otherwise, with the incredible decline of marsh and littoral habitat, the family might well have become extinct in parts of continents such as North America and Europe. In developed countries today, prime habitat for rails is rapidly being destroyed as marshes are filled in, streams diverted, water impounded or managed in various ways.

Ecologists like myself are constantly pointing out the danger of reordering estuarine systems, especially where fresh water meets salt, for this is the terrain of many of the great biological processes that help to sustain human life. The enigmatic and mysterious rails can thus point out to us where human planning is failing, and where the future of our own habitats and vitality is being irreparably weakened.

Wrestling, seen here in an 18th-century painting by Kim Hong-do, is a specialty in a country credited with perfecting martial arts. At summer Olympics, Koreans expect to do well in judo and boxing, too.

By Pico Iyer

The yin and yang of paradoxical, prosperous Korea

History's latest economic miracle hosts this year's Olympics while still wrestling with new—and centuries old—conflicts

National symbol, swirls of yin and yang linked in a circle, shows enduring influence of Chinese culture.

In the It'aewŏn area of modern Seoul, catcher's mitts are sold on sidewalks outside stores that specialize in eel-skin goods. Japanese-style sing-along *karaoke* bars rub shoulders with country-and-western bars like the Cowboy Arms. Over here is the Radio City disco, the Manhattan shopping center and the Las Vegas night-club, over there the U.N. disco, the U.N. Furniture Company, not to mention the U.N. Game Room. Above the furiously winking neon of the bar-lined alleys a faded old sign for the Grand Ole Opry stands and, not far away, like a chilly reproach, a scarlet neon cross. By night, noisy gangs of American GIs reel through the steep and narrow lanes, looking for a good time. By day, the area overflows with locals hawking bags, belts and jackets at everything-must-go prices.

It'aewŏn, in short, anthologizes many an outsider's impressions of South Korea. For years most of us thought of it, if we thought of it at all, mainly as the bleak and frozen land where Americans, with a little help from the United Nations, did battle two generations ago, or as the Cold War setting for the zany doings of Alan Alda and company in the popular TV series M*A*S*H. Only later has it blossomed as the new Asian economic miracle, whose low-paid workers are said to menace our economy with their $5,000 Hyundais; and now, as the site of the Games of the XXIVth Olympiad.

All this is in evidence in It'aewŏn. Cowboy bars and pizza joints are gaudy reminders of the 43,000 American military personnel still stationed in the Republic of Korea, their presence savagely protested by left-wing student rioters. The cameo appearance of "U.N." in many signs recalls that it was under the flag of the United Nations that 16 countries joined South Korea in entering a war which, despite three decades of armistice, still officially drags on in the Demilitarized Zone, some 30 miles north of Seoul. The glowing cross signals that this is also a country where fully 8 million of the republic's 43 million people are Christians.

Korea is a tiny peninsula, no bigger than Great Britain or New York State, squeezed between Tokyo and Beijing, less than 1,000 miles away on either side. In certain ways modern Seoul can be seen as a curious mixture of Chinese, Japanese and American influences. The yin-yang symbol on the flag, the ornate temples laid out according to geomantic principles, the Lees and Changs that fill the phone books speak of a Korea that for centuries was a cultural province of China. But the taxi drivers in white gloves, the shiny department stores like the one with 42 restaurants on a single floor, the coffeeshops with names like Deux Beau Couture and the seething underground shopping labyrinths are indirect reminders that for 35 years of this century Korea was a colony of Japan.

Nevertheless, Koreans waiting to greet 161 nations at the Olympics this September are determined to show the world that their fiercely independent culture was never fully overwhelmed by either of its powerful neighbors. The Korean language includes Chinese terms and a sentence structure like Japanese. But it is

Korea's rocky road to the Olympics

Seoul's busy markets sell everything from eels to VCRs, reflecting per capita gross national product of $3,000.

also indubitably one of those idiosyncratic Ural-Altaic languages, like Finnish and Hungarian, that are completely unrelated to any of the world's more common tongues. The Korean alphabet, *han'gŭl,* is a radically simple system of 24 phonetic symbols that constitutes one of the clearest and most logical systems of writing ever devised.

Korean ingenuity has a long history. One of the oldest surviving Zen temples in the world is in Korea. So is the largest steel plant. In 1442 the Koreans created the world's first rain gauge, and, in the late 1500s, the first armor-clad warships, known as the "turtle ships" (p. 50). Fully 200 years before Gutenberg, Koreans devised the first movable type.

When 200 million or so people around the world flick on their TV sets next month, they may glimpse in the background a tough and tenacious land as flinty and as stubborn as its acronym, ROK. Korea has a craggy landscape of granite and limestone, erupting into steep, jagged mountains from a coastline dotted with more than 3,000 islands. Guidebooks sometimes refer to the Korean people as the "Irish of the Orient," partly because of their capacity for feuding with one another but mainly because of their feistiness and his-

Tiger mascot of Seoul Olympics poses in 100,000-seat stadium with college students who promote Games.

Streaming lights from traffic, and modern office buildings circle Seoul's South Gate, built in late 1390s.

tory of affliction. Again and again a visitor is told that the Korean alphabet is the greatest in the world, the Korean military the best educated and the Korean cuisine the spiciest. Newspaper editors who print articles that Koreans really dislike run the risk of strenuous public criticism and have even been known to find themselves on the receiving end of death threats.

Koreans are, by East Asian standards, outgoing and volatile—a smiling, boisterous, backslapping lot. They do not always practice the distancing courtesies of Japan, or the close-to-the-chest strategies of China. By and large they seem a rough-and-ready, push-and-shove people, full of humor and humors, warm but pugnacious. In the quiet, piano-tinkling bar of a four-star hotel, two demure young matrons suddenly set about pummeling each other. And on a tour bus in the capital, a local guide stuns his foreign audience by bursting into a heartfelt rendition of an old Korean ditty about a man leaving his wife and setting out on a journey. After waiting for applause he supplies this rather unorthodox translation: "If you give woman trouble, if you make woman cry, you will get athlete's foot before you walk four kilometers." One of the most ethnically and historically homogeneous peoples in the world, Koreans have the broad faces of Mongolians and bodies good for boxing, weight lifting and judo. It is no coincidence that they are generally credited with refining the martial art of *T'aekwŏn-do.* Explaining why his compatriots, though stocky, are so strong, a Korean tells me, "Small peppers are hot."

The stubborn spirit of the place may be partly the result of a climate that combines Siberian cold in winter with the swelter of Pacific monsoons in summer. But it is mostly the result of a long history of war, invasion, occupation, resistance, war, destruction, rebirth, peace—and war. "When whales fight, the shrimp get hurt," as the melancholy local adage has it. And indeed, it has been Korea's unhappy fortune to fall within the sights of many expansionist powers. The peninsula has been invaded on scores of occasions, most notably by the Japanese, Chinese, Mongols and Manchus. Typically, Korea had hardly recovered from two full-scale Japanese attacks in the 1590s when it was invaded from the north in 1627 by the Manchus. Invasion and occu-

Pico Iyer, who has recently published Video Night in Kathmandu, *an account of his visits to ten countries in Asia, last wrote for* SMITHSONIAN *on British India.*

A Korean invention, "turtle ships" covered with spikes to repel boarders demolished Japanese fleet in 1592.

pation have persisted even into the 20th century. When still recovering from the Japanese occupation of 1910-45 and World War II, it became the first country in history to be variously occupied or fought over by three modern superpowers. Resistance and resilience are part of the essence of Korea. So if Korea is, as the Korean Quaker Ham Sŏk Hŏn calls it, the "Queen of Suffering," it is also, surely, the Prince of Renaissances. Burdened with conflicting traditions, the country is also weighed down with a tradition of conflicts.

Korean division runs in all directions. The hard-core, Stalinist North has had but one ruler, dictator Kim Il-sung, in its 40-year history, and is totally hostile still to the South, where incessant tumult and political wrangling insured that, since 1948, not a single peaceful transfer of political power had taken place until last February. The North is isolated and controlled. The South is a republic on alert, where air-raid drills are held the 15th of each month, and a visitor hears so much vehement propaganda that he could imagine himself in a war zone.

It is all too easy to recall the signs of tension, violence, disorder. Korean Air Lines flight 007 was shot down by the Soviets in 1983 under mysterious and still-troubling circumstances. Just a month later, 17 top South Korean officials were killed in otherwise sleepy Rangoon by a bomb placed by North Koreans still wanting to "unify" the peninsula under Communist control. Last fall another Korean airliner was bombed, sending 115 people to their deaths. Internal dissonance also persists. Street demonstrations have occurred in Seoul for years, originally against the iron control of Syngman Rhee, president from 1948-60. Today, even after the bitterly fought direct presidential election of last December, demonstrators protest the presence of American troops.

In a generation, rubble to riches

Beyond the division between the president, Roh Tae Woo, and his clamorous political opposition, is the division within that opposition itself. The refusal by the two rival opposition leaders, Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam, to compromise with each other gave Roh Tae Woo his victory in the recent presidential race. Despite this violent wrangling, over the past 20 or so years the country's astonishing economic growth has continued. In scarcely more than a generation South Korea has been transformed from rubble to riches. In 1961, the annual per capita gross national product was less than $100. Today, at close to $3,000, it rivals that of Portugal.

The land known as Chosŏn (Land of the Morning Calm) is the product, so they say, of a bear and 20 pieces of garlic. When Hwan'ung, the son of the Divine

Creator, descended to Earth, he overheard the prayers of a bear who wished to become human. He gave the bear the garlic and asked it to retire into a cave for 100 days. The animal did so and in return was transformed into a woman, who bore a son by the god. This boy was Tan'gun, legendary founder of Korea. Legends being legends, Tan'gun went on to enjoy the kind of untroubled rule denied to all his successors, remaining on the throne for 1,500 years.

More empirical souls have traced life in the peninsula to migrant tribes drifting down from northern and central Asia to set up a clannish, shamanistic society here about 3,000 years ago.

Under siege from the north

Whatever the truth, Korea was certainly weaned on invasion. Whenever rival forces were at war in China, thousands of refugees spilled over the border into Korea. Whenever China was strongly unified, thousands of invasion-minded soldiers poured over instead. Either way, life was worse for the Koreans. Soon a distinct pattern began to emerge: each new power north of the border set about attacking strategic and seemingly weak Korea, which met attacks with stout resistance. In A.D. 612, for example, China sent more than a million men swarming across the Yalu River—to no avail. Indeed, after one especially disastrous attack on P'yŏngyang, only 2,700 of the 300,000 invaders came out alive. It was not until 735 that China and Kŏrea finally settled on a face-saving agreement. Korea officially became—and would remain on and off for centuries—a tributary state of China, while continuing to enjoy sovereignty over all the land south of the Taedong River, site of modern P'yŏngyang.

The peninsula was also beset with internal disturbances. From the fourth century on, after a 400-year period of Chinese occupation, Korea was torn apart internally by three feuding kingdoms: Koguryŏ, made up of horsemen, hunters and fighters from the mountains of Manchuria who set up a martial society in the north; Paekche, based in the agricultural southwest; and Silla, which evolved out of a loose federation of tribes with a power base near modern Kyŏngju. Silla, Paekche, Koguryŏ: these names haunt Korean history far longer than those of the House of Lancaster and the House of York do English history. Even after Silla effectively took control of the entire region in 668, the agitation hardly subsided: of the last 20 Silla kings, fewer than half died natural deaths.

It was the age of Silla, however, that saw the first great flowering of Korean culture. The country grew so rich in gold and silver that, according to a Chinese chronicler, every one of the 170,000 houses in the then capital of Kyŏngju boasted a tiled roof. Modern Kyŏngju still shines with impressive memorials to the glories of that age. Grand and enigmatic mounds along the streets downtown mark the tombs of old Silla kings. The resonant tolling of the 20-ton Emille Bell, cast in the year 771, can be heard up to 40 miles away. But most moving of all is the magisterial Sŏkkuram Grotto, where one of the finest Buddhas in all Asia, larger than life and carved from a single block of white granite, sits serenely.

In same war, Japanese took Korean fortress of Pusan after their muskets outmatched defenders' arrows.

In 1966, in P'anmunjŏm, North Korean and U.S. guards ignore each other. Peace talks are still stalemated.

It was at this time, too (roughly when, in Europe, Charlemagne was trying to establish his Frankish kingdom), that Korea became the principal thoroughfare for the transportation of goods and ideas from China to Japan. In the light of Japan's subsequent denigration of Koreans as peasants and bumpkins, it is worth recalling that Korean monks staffed the first Buddhist monastery in Japan, Korean scholars tutored some of Japan's most celebrated princes, and Korean immigrants first brought Chinese medicine and characters to Japan. By 815, in fact, almost one-third of all Japanese noblemen were actually of Korean descent.

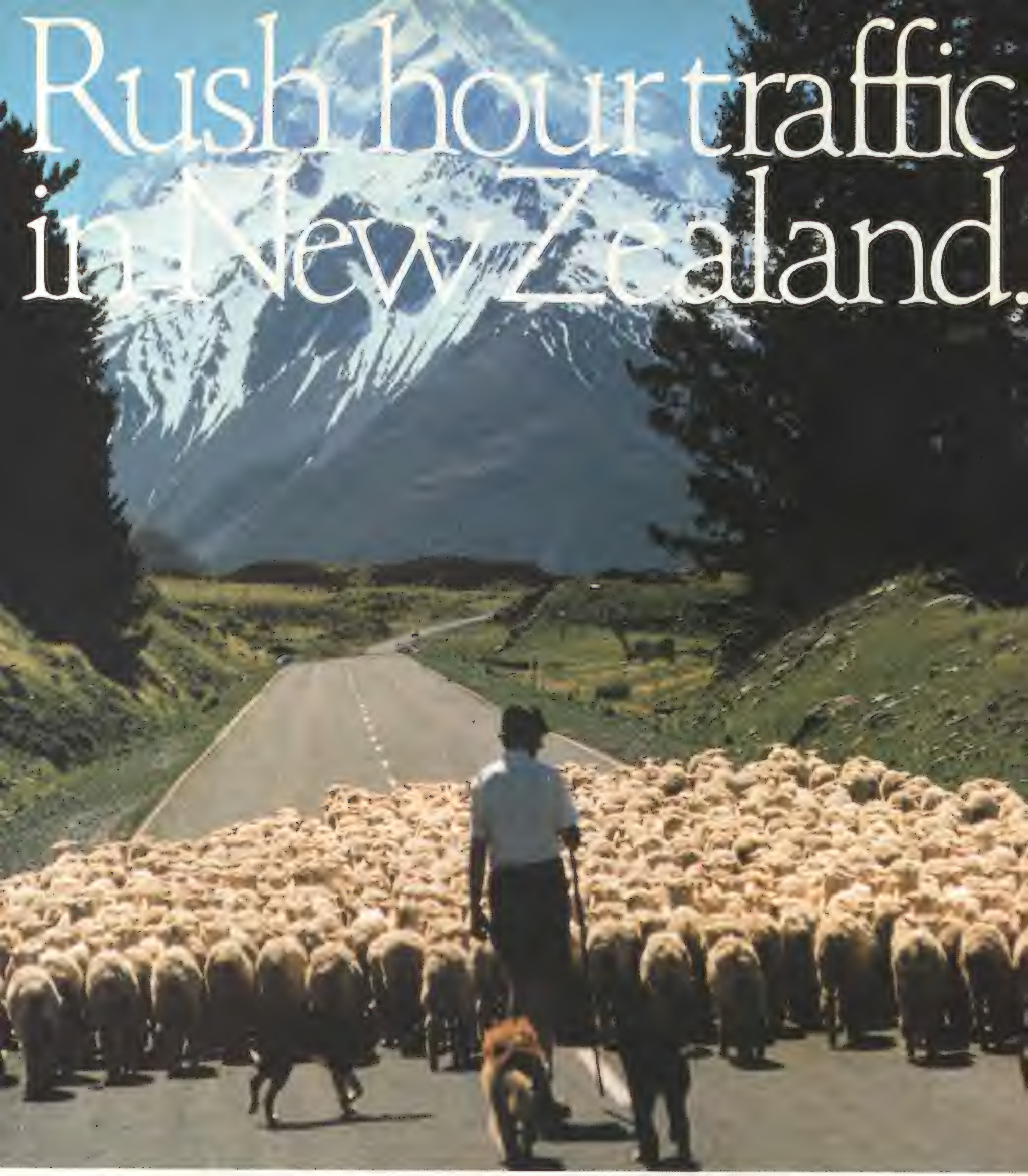
What we think of as modern "Korea" might be said to have had its birth in 918, when Wang Kŏn, a leader from the increasingly powerful merchant class, set up the Koryŏ dynasty. Despite its new name, the country still faced an all-too-familiar problem: a seemingly endless supply of attackers—the Khitan of southern Manchuria, the Jurchen tribe, and ultimately the Mongol horsemen of Genghis Khan. Korea resisted the Golden Horde with typical ferocity, fending them off for three decades (one Buddhist monk even managed to fell a Mongol general with an arrow). In 1257, though, the Koreans surrendered, agreeing to pay the Mongols a huge tribute in the form of gold, silver, ginseng and fighting birds, as well as teams of skillful artisans and clusters of beautiful women.

The dawning of a second golden age

When the Mongol influence finally faded, a new Korean dynasty—the Yi—was established in the peninsula, in 1392, by a military commander named Yi Sŏnggye. Troubled Korea saw the dawning of its second golden age. Yi transferred his capital to Hanyang (also known as Seoul, or "capital"), decorated the city with palaces and shrines, and founded his government upon a new and more systematic brand of Confucianism. Previously, Buddhism had always been regarded as a complement to Confucianism, concentrating not on society but self, not on this world but the next. Yi's Neo-Confucians, however, saw Buddhism's notions of individualism and meditation as threats to social harmony. Monastery lands were confiscated, Buddhist cremations were replaced by Confucian ancestor worship and reverence for authority. By 1425, all but 18 of the country's temples were shuttered.

It was against this background that perhaps the greatest of Korea's rulers, King Sejong, fourth king of the Yi dynasty, took the throne. In the course of his 32-year rule, from 1418 to 1450, this cultured patron of the arts set up the Chiphyŏn-jon, or Hall of Talented Scholars, a kind of Royal Academy commissioned to compile histories, science texts and Confucian commentaries. It was this group of men who, at the king's behest, came up with *han'gŭl*, a practical new alphabet. Initially it was scorned by Korean scholars and officials, and was considered suitable only for women and peasants. Eventually, however, it democratized learning. Today in Korea *han'gŭl* is so revered that its anniversary, October 9, is a national holiday.

Korea, however, had not seen the last of its invasions. In 1592, the Japanese dispatched 130,000 troops with a view to conquering China (and, of course, seizing Korea en route). Before long, the invaders had overrun Seoul and seemed on the brink of taking over the whole country. That was the cue for Korea's most celebrated military hero, Adm. Yi Sun-sin, to come forward with his famous "turtle ships." Propelled by oars, these humped boats were unusually fast, and thanks to the iron spikes that the admiral had fixed on their decks (nearly 300 years before the *Monitor*



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1988 Food & Tourism Year

The climate is right for New Zealand.

Student riots against the government, or a disliked political candidate, are seasonal events in Seoul, which has many colleges and universities. This year, demand is that two Koreas unite and Americans go home.

and the *Merrimack*), they were virtually impregnable.

In less than four months, the ingenious admiral succeeded in sinking almost 300 enemy vessels, and naval attacks on Korea ceased. China also intervened on Korea's behalf. Later, Yi himself was demoted, the victim of typical Korean political infighting, and in 1597 the Japanese felt free to renew the war. By the time they had reduced the Korean fleet to just 12 ships, it was clear that only one solution remained: bring back Yi. This the Koreans did and the admiral again performed a miracle, using his 12 ships to rout 133 enemy craft. Yi was killed a year later by a stray bullet, but the Japanese had already begun to withdraw. Korea, however, was left devastated. As the "Song of Great Peace," written in 1598, graphically puts it, "Higher than mountains, the bones / pile up in the fields. / Vast cities, great towns / become the burrows of wolves and foxes."

Hardly more than a generation later, Manchu warriors, soon to conquer China itself, swept down, and once again the Korean king was forced to give up treasure and hostages, and to bow nine times on the banks of the Han River in surrender. Thereafter, impoverished and weary of invasions, the battered peninsula retreated into isolation. It became known as the Hermit Kingdom (a term that has lately been revived to refer to Kim Il-sung's North Korea).

Just when the West was moving from strength to industrial strength, the Yi dynasty, even more than either China or Japan, was sinking into a more and more rigid conservatism. History, however—mostly in the form of trade—was not to be denied. By the middle of the 19th century, one foreign power after another began trying to pry open Korea. In 1866, an American-owned merchant ship, the *General Sherman*, sailed up the Taedong River in defiance of Korean edicts. When it ran aground, the band of adventurers on board fired on a crowd of Koreans. In return, the ship was burned and sunk, with all its crew aboard.

An angry American government repeatedly asked Korea to acknowledge the incident. The Korean government repeatedly responded with vague evasions. Finally, in 1871, after sending two expeditionary ships in vain attempts to resolve the issue, Washington dispatched five warships under the command of Rear Adm. John Rodgers. When Korean shore batteries at Kanghwa Island opened fire, the American ships retaliated. By the time the Americans had withdrawn, 3 Americans and 243 Koreans were dead. But in 1882 the two countries signed the first Korean-American

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Confucian scholars are honored in Korea, which was more influenced by the philosophy than even China.

Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation, in Inch'ŏn, a busy port 25 miles west of Seoul. Today a whitewashed replica of the Statue of Liberty holds its torch aloft on a hillside in that city.

The most muscular and persistent of Korea's modern suitors was Japan, which had absorbed a crash course in gunboat diplomacy when Commodore Matthew Perry breached its defenses in 1853. By 1895, the Meiji emperor had managed to shake Korea loose from its long-term relationship with China. And by 1905, Japan had effectively taken over Korea. The Korean Army was disbanded and a Japanese resident-general was put in charge of the country. The official annexation of Korea by Japan that followed in 1910 was a virtual formality.

In their efforts to exploit and "enlighten" what they continued to regard as a backward people, Japanese colonizers set about eradicating nearly every aspect of Korean culture, from distinctive costumes to ancient palaces and temples. In the end, Koreans were forced to speak Japanese, to take up Japanese beliefs, even to adopt Japanese names.

The ghost of Japanese power

The Japanese surely improved highways, hospitals and schools. Yet among Koreans today you find little of the affection toward their former rulers that sometimes shows, for example, among certain Indians toward the British. Nevertheless, the ghost of Japanese power remains an unquiet presence in Korea. Physically, you see it in such grandiose monuments as the Japanese-built Seoul Railway Station and the Capitol Building (now home to the National Museum). Emotionally, you feel it in the anti-Japanese tirades that many Koreans embark on almost as soon as they meet a foreigner.

Korean resistance to Japan was characteristically unyielding. The first stop on a city tour of Seoul today is the statue of one An Chung-gŭn, who in 1909 assassinated the first Japanese resident-general and, in the inimitable words of a Korean tour guide, enjoined his countrymen to "kill for world peace." By March 1, 1919, this Korean resistance reached a national climax when 1,500 separate demonstrations were staged across the country. That astonishing show of defiance panicked the Japanese police. By the time the smoke had cleared, roughly 7,000 Koreans were dead. Thereafter cultural colonialism continued as before. Korean history was still banned in schools, Korean men were forced to "volunteer" for the Imperial Army, Korean women were turned into army prostitutes.

The only force strengthened by the harsh Japanese rule was, curiously enough, the influence of Christianity. Catholic priests had first entered the country as early as 1795—only to be executed as uninvited import-

Young women modeling long skirts, short jackets are showing off a traditional style that is now mainly worn by older women. Younger ones no longer feel obliged to cover as much of the body as possible.

ers of pernicious Western influence. Even so, the number of Korean Catholics steadily increased during the years that followed, and during the middle decades of the 19th century more than 8,000 believers were massacred. Then, and during the time of Japanese colonialism, Christian churches served as a sanctuary and a support for libertarian ideas. One of the first Western works translated into Korean was *Pilgrim's Progress.*

When the Pacific War ended with Japan's humiliation in 1945, Korea for the first time in four decades was suddenly, intoxicatingly free. Three weeks later, however, euphoria began to collapse. The country was divided at the 38th parallel and occupied, in the north by Soviet troops, in the south by the Americans. Before long, that arbitrary and temporary dividing line hardened into a fixed boundary. In 1948, after the United Nations urged that open elections be held, Syngman Rhee, a longtime fighter for Korean independence and a Princeton PhD, became the first president of the new republic of South Korea. The North held an election but refused to allow U.N. observers. The result was the installation of the present Soviet-style regime under Kim Il-sung. On June 25, 1950, convinced that the United States would not fight to protect the South, North Korea sent T-34 tanks clanking and rumbling across the 38th parallel. Koreans were at war with one another.

Communist forces quickly overran four-fifths of the country. After nearly three months of fighting, Gen. Douglas MacArthur dramatically turned the tide with a daring amphibious attack at Inch'ŏn. (Today, a 33-foot statue of the general, accompanied by a plaque that vilifies the "malignant infection of Communism," stands proudly above the gritty industrial port.) By Thanksgiving Day 1950, American and South Korean troops had driven the invaders back over the 38th parallel and advance elements had reached North Korea's border with China. Meanwhile, 300,000 Chinese troops had stolen across the border, and they now leveled an attack on the U.N. and Korean forces. A year of fierce, skillful but inconclusive fighting, directed by Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, led to truce talks at the village of P'anmunjŏm in an officially demilitarized zone between the two halves of the country. The fighting,

A Korean grandfather and his grandson, sporting an Olympic hat, look forward to the upcoming Games.

however, continued, and it was not until July 27, 1953, that an armistice was finally signed.

The Military Armistice Commission is still there. On winter days, the walled Unification Road, which leads from Seoul to the Demilitarized Zone, still seems frozen inside a Cold War reverie, a grim antitank barrier running between bare trees and bleak brown hills. Inside the 800-yard-wide Joint Security Area in the DMZ is a small and drafty room like a high school classroom, at which ten folding chairs sit forlornly around a green-felt-covered table. Discussions about armistice violations have been held here almost once a month for 35 years. But intermittent efforts at peace talks between North and South have produced meager results and a resolution to the issue is no closer. By a happy irony, though, the desolate no-man's-land of the DMZ has become a kind of unofficial wildlife sanctuary (SMITHSONIAN, October 1981), where visitors can see such lovely rarities as Manchurian cranes flying in free formation high above the barbed wire.

The Korean War killed more than 2 million Koreans and broke up 10 million families. Afterward Seoul lay in ruins. Throughout the '50s, the economy remained stagnant, while the security-minded President Rhee brusquely shouldered aside attempts to broaden popular participation in government. In 1960, when thousands of people rose up against his regime, their protests at first met with harsh retaliation from the police. But deserted by his own military, who refused to fire on the demonstrators, Rhee soon resigned. A year later, after an attempt at parliamentary democracy ended in chaos, another intransigent figure, Maj. Gen. Park Chung Hee, seized power. It was Park, however, who presided over an 18-year period of extraordinary economic development that is still going on. Park's government made effective use of millions in foreign aid, and strongly supported business. An increasingly well-educated Korean work force labored tirelessly, for little pay and under harsh conditions. Under what came to be known as "Confucian capitalism" the country at times achieved an annual growth rate of 14 percent, with exports growing by as much as 40 percent a year. Yet much like his exact contemporary, Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, Park rewrote the constitution to allow himself to remain indefinitely in office and harshly suppressed his opposition. In 1979, he was assassinated by the chief of his own intelligence service.

Still another general, Chun Doo Hwan, soon took command of the South Korean republic in yet another coup d'état. He pledged, however, to step aside after one seven-year term. Confucian capitalism continued to boom, but eventually workers began to strike for more money and decent working conditions. By late last year, street demonstrations had finally forced Chun to hold a direct presidential election. Although almost two-thirds of the Korean electorate voted against Chun's handpicked successor, former general Roh Tae Woo, a split in the ranks of the opposition party gave Roh a small plurality and victory.

In recent months, along with preparations for the Olympics, political developments have continued to spin ahead at a breakneck pace. Long the country's strongest power broker, Chun was effectively silenced after his younger brother was arrested for embezzling government funds. In legislative elections held this past spring, the opposition scored a triumph and prevented the ruling party from winning a majority in the National Assembly.

Students have taken to the streets again lately, not only to demand reunification of Korea, but to protest the presence of U.S. forces. Contentiousness is sure to continue, and party politics in Korea may be accurately defined as the art of the impossible. Yet for all the turmoil, there remains a curious constancy in the country's spirit. On a chilly winter's night in It'aewŏn, a young hostess at the Pacific Bar flips open her purse to reveal a photograph of Roh Tae Woo. A visitor teasingly asks if it is a picture of her boyfriend. "No, no!" she insists, all earnestness. "This is a picture of the Korean king! This man is our king!" A monarchical democracy, source of a fierce national pride: even as Korea transforms itself daily, some things never seem to change.

Rugged, forested cliffs of Mount Sŏraksan are typical of a land that is 70 percent mountainous terrain.

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By Dora Jane Hamblin

The trade and treasure of Phoenicia come alive in a Venetian palazzo

From their homes on the Levantine littoral, the world's first traveling salesmen sailed off and colonized the Mediterranean world

Once in a while comes an international exhibition so encompassing in scope, so evocative in presentation, and so valuable in content that it cannot tour the world. In that case, the world has to get up and tour it.

Such a one is "The Phoenicians," which opened in Venice this spring and will run through November 6 in the privately owned (by Fiat), 18th-century Palazzo Grassi. About one-fifth of its more than 1,000 artifacts, from exquisitely worked gold and glass jewelry to gilt bronze breastplate, from mirrors and razors to terra-cotta figurines, metal bowls, painted ostrich eggs, have never been exhibited before and are the hit of the year in show-drenched, festival-festooned Italy.

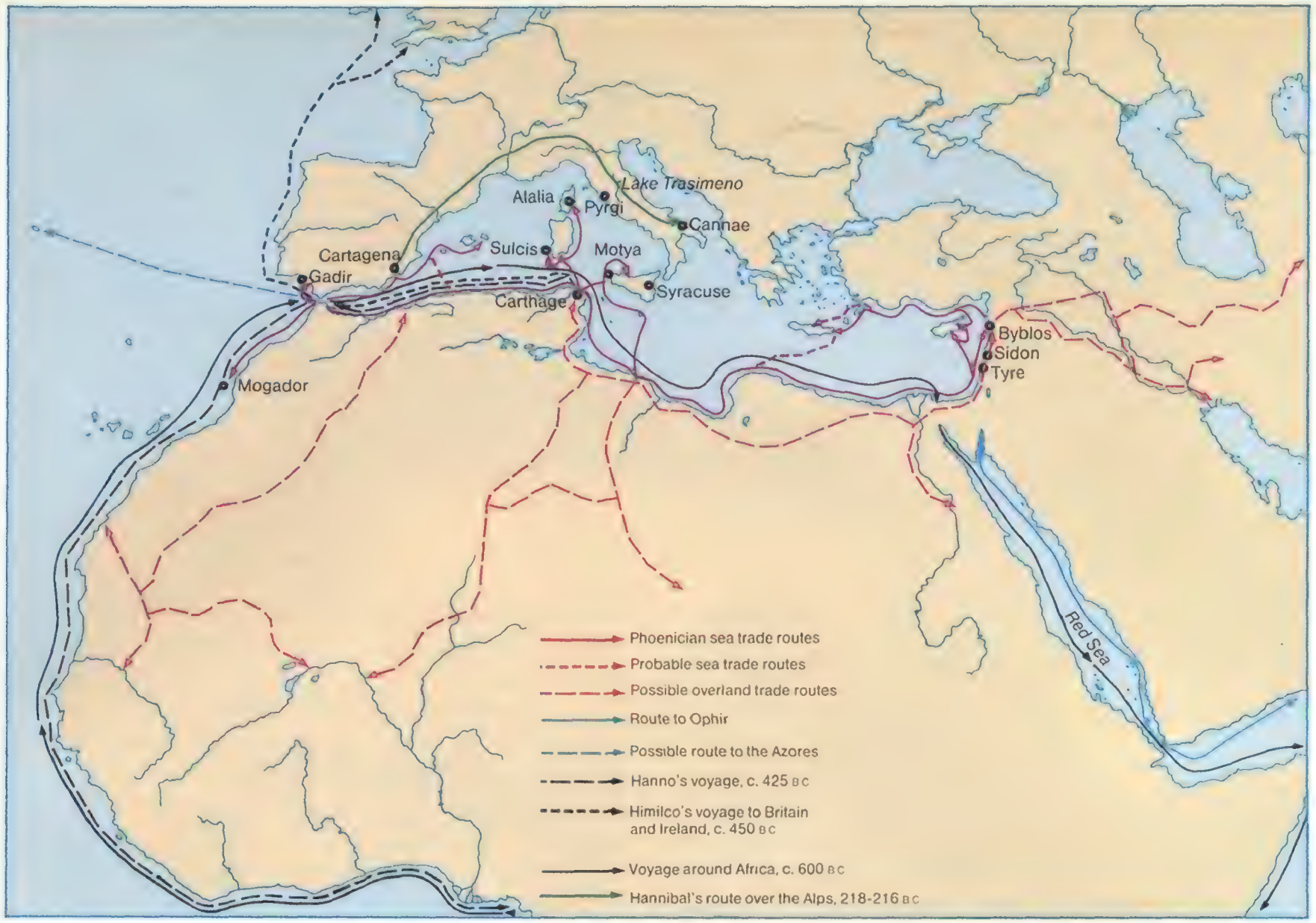
To the surprise and joy of everyone, it is open every single day of the week from 10 A.M. to 7 P.M., nonstop and nonstrike, a miracle in Italy, where museums close at 2 P.M. and are never open on Monday. Designed by its scientific director, Italian archaeologist Sabatino Moscati, to be not just "*an* exhibition on the Phoenicians, rather *the* exhibition," it includes items from Belgium, Cyprus, France, Great Britain, Lebanon, Malta, Spain, Tunisia and a dozen Italian sites from Sicily to Sardinia to the mainland. All celebrate a vanished people who sprang from a short, narrow coastal strip of Syro-Palestine and the storied cities of Tyre, Byblos, Sidon.

"Enigmatic" is one of the most overworked words in the lexicon of writers about vanished civilizations, but in the case of the Phoenicians it is at least partially appropriate. On the anthropological evidence they had no clear racial or physical type, no specific origin. They were rather a mishmash of groups that met and merged during centuries of human ebb and flow through this ancient corner of the world. They had no territory of their own apart from the cities and their immediate environs. They were included in biblical references to "Canaanites"; scholars now believe that the term was inclusive of, but not definitive of, the Phoenicians. Even what they called themselves is unknown. "Phoenician" comes from the words the Greeks used: "Phoinike" for the region, "Phoinikes" for the people, both from the common noun *phoinix*, which meant "purple-red." This in turn is a tribute to the famous Phoenician dye, the "royal purple" so prized by the ancient world. It was derived from a Mediterranean snail called murex, and there is a nice legend that the dyers of the Phoenician cities discovered it by noting the purplish color of the lips of those who ate the snail.

Whoever they were, they settled in easily defended coastal sites perhaps as early as the second or third millennium B.C., with the sea at their feet, mountains at their backs, a wealth of timber—cedars of Lebanon—on their hills, and not only murex snails on their beaches but also a treasure in sodium and calcium silicates in their sand. They didn't invent glass, but they were among the first to use it extensively and expertly.

As their more powerful neighbors—Egyptians, Hittites, Babylonians—battled one another, the coastal city people quietly sailed up and down, trading their wood and glass, dye and fish, for the grain and wine their sparse territory couldn't supply in volume. They achieved specific identity about 1200 B.C. when an invasion by the mysterious Bronze Age "peoples of the sea" brought the traders' powerful neighbors to their knees. The city-states were relatively untouched by the disaster, but their trading partners were in decline, and their inland hinterland was being invaded and occu-

Lustrous glass necklace pendant of a bearded male, probably a deity, is from the fourth century B.C.



Skills learned navigating the Mediterranean's tricky shifting winds served the Phoenicians well when, as is indicated on map, they sailed a wooden ship down Africa's east coast and rounded Cape of Good Hope.

pied by Hebrews fleeing Egypt. If the Phoenicians still wanted to trade, there was nowhere to go but *out*. So out they went, and their saga began.

Pliny once reported flatly that the "Phoenicians invented trade." Though an exaggeration, it is recognition of a people who were in fact the world's first traveling salesmen.

Quickly they made contact with the island of Cyprus, just off their well-defended shores, and then they went west along the rim of the Mediterranean, establishing first not colonies but simple trading posts, harbors for their ships, sheds for their goods. On these short-haul commercial trips they sailed by day, almost always during the clement months between March and October, and always in sight of land. Having made 20 to 25 nautical miles, they halted at night.

The Phoenicians traded not only their own products but also copper ore from Cyprus, tin from Spain and Anatolia, linen from Egypt, gold, silver, ivory and precious stones, sometimes apes and peacocks from Africa.

Some of these products were taken back to the home cities to be turned into household furnishings of ivory-inlaid cedar, bronze and silver bowls, trinkets for decoration. Others were delivered to customers en route. Herodotus tells a tale of trade in West Africa. The Phoenicians, he wrote, landed and spread their goods on the beach, then retired to their boats and raised a smoke. The natives came out, laid gold beside the Phoenician goods as a barter price and retired. The mutual comings and goings went on until both sides were satisfied and the Phoenicians sailed away. Neither side, said Herodotus, ever cheated.

What stunned the ancient world far more, however, was Phoenician skill at long, daring trips. At the end of the seventh century B.C., the Egyptian pharaoh Necho, searching for a viable connection between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean and having no notion of Africa's size, sent some Phoenicians south out of the Red Sea. In three years these intrepid sailors circumnavigated Africa, a feat not accomplished again for almost 2,000 years, until Vasco da Gama. They stopped each year at seed time to plant and harvest food, and if forced to sail at night, they navigated by a bright star in the constellation Ursa Minor, most likely either Kochab or Polaris. But 2,000 years ago it was known respectfully as the "Phoenician Star." These mariners didn't

The author, who writes about archaeology all around the Mediterranean, says had she lived in ancient times she would like to have been Etruscan or Carthaginian.

find a passage to the Mediterranean; there wasn't one until the Suez Canal did the trick in 1869.

In the fifth century B.C., they accomplished two more sea spectaculars, both in the interest of trade and commerce. By this time the picture had changed from "Phoenicia east" to "Phoenicia west." In 814 B.C. a princess of Tyre, Elissa, sailed out to found the city of Carthage in today's Tunisia (SMITHSONIAN, February 1979). Carthage, where she was known as Dido, grew, prospered, guided an empire that ranged across the coast of North Africa to Sicily, to Sardinia, to Spain. The Carthaginian Himilco sailed from Carthage through the Pillars of Hercules, around the coast of Spain, up past Brittany, perhaps as far as Britain and Ireland. He was in search of tin and of a sea route that would be an alternative to tortuous overland passages. And just a few decades later, Hanno sailed west into the Atlantic and around the west coast of Africa as far as the Gulf of Guinea.

Sand dune and miniature sea

To celebrate these feats, the coordinating architectural designer of the new exhibition, Italy's Gae Aulenti (now famous for her interior design of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris), created a stunning set piece on the palazzo's second floor: a miniature sea in which float Phoenician and Carthaginian ship models, precise in every detail, from 17 inches to 6 feet in length. Her other stunners include a towering, fake sand dune at the entrance of the palazzo from which emerge anthropomorphic sarcophagi from Phoenician necropolises; a reconstruction of a tophet; and both a maze and a video show that trace the development of the Phoenician alphabet, from which ours derives.

Inevitably, as the power of Carthage grew, Phoenicia west collided with colony-founding Greeks and with the growing power of Rome. It is the fate of vanished—and vanquished—peoples to be chronicled most fully and most critically by those with whom they struggled and lost. Thus Plutarch could call them a "coarse and gloomy people," and Appian describes them as "cruel and arrogant." Yet even their enemies had to admit their skills. One area of expertise was described vividly by the Greek historian Polybius in the second century B.C.: the Carthaginians "were far superior, both in the speed of their ships and the way they built them, and also in the experience and skill of their seamen."

It is a particular irony that so little remains of their own records of themselves, for it is believed that they developed the first primitive alphabet in the 13th-11th centuries B.C. Using a combination of signs taken from Egyptian single-consonant symbols and phonetic values from Semitic tongues, they pared down the myriad

Relief shows cedar being unloaded from *hippos*, small rivercraft that carried, and also trailed, the logs.

Phoenician (left) and Etruscan texts on gold sheets were concealed in ruins of temple sacked by Romans.

Battle and hunting scenes enliven silver-gilt bowl; in the center, Egyptian warriors and Asiatic prisoners.

From Nimrud, eighth-century B.C. ivory plaquette of a winged griffin was a decorative panel for furniture.

signs of other languages to a compact 22 symbols. In its original form there were no vowels. The Greeks added those later, before passing it along to Rome.

Though it can be read, the record of the Phoenicians, like that of the Etruscans, remains mostly in funerary citations, dedications of temples or votive offerings, lists of divinities. What remain are indirect sources—Egyptian and Mesopotamian records of transactions with Phoenician cities, Assyrian boasts of conquering them. They get a better press in the Old Testament, from which it is clear that King Hiram of Tyre was a friend of both King David and of Solomon (I Kings 5), and that he provided the cedar and fir trees and skilled workmen to build Solomon's temple. Then, in I Kings 7: 13-14, Solomon summoned another Phoenician, "a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass."

Later, the Carthaginians of Phoenicia west got on equally well with the Etruscans. They joined forces in 535 B.C. to defeat the Greeks at Alalia in Corsica and divide up spheres of power—the Etruscans held onto Corsica and Elba, the Carthaginians the larger islands of Sicily and Sardinia. Further evidence of the amity between the two peoples turned up in 1964 at Pyrgi (now Santa Severa) in Italy. Pyrgi was the port for an ancient Etruscan city, and in the ruins of a sanctuary there archaeologists found three thin gold sheets folded up like letters, with inscriptions in both Etruscan and

High relief of lion attacking an Ethiopian, in ivory with gold, is inlaid with lapis lazuli and cornelian.

Panther attacks a bull in mosaic pavement of riverbed pebbles, from a fourth-century B.C. house in Motya.

Phoenician. They date from about 500 B.C. and record the dedication of a shrine in which both groups worshiped the same goddess—the Etruscans as Uni, the Carthaginians as Astarte.

Pyrgi was a perfect place to find Carthaginians, as their primary thrust was always trade, not territory. When they established a proper settlement, like Carthage, they selected a spot as nearly like their eastern home cities as possible: promontories beside which ships could dock on two sides, or small offshore islands like Motya off Sicily, Sant'Antioco off Sardinia, Mogador off Morocco. And Gadir (or Gades), modern Cadiz, off Spain. Nowadays that ancient site is joined to the mainland, but when they founded the city the Phoenicians chose the north end of a long, skinny island forming a bar across the bay at the mouth of the Guadalete River. When necessary, to provide additional anchorage or idling space for repairs, they hacked out artificial pools called *cothons.* A small one is still visible on Motya, a larger one in the ruins of Carthage.

Shallow water also provided the salt flats so typical of Carthaginian sites. Salt flats, heaps of discarded snail shells, and rock-cut dyeing vats are good clues to locations of long-lost settlements all around the Mediterranean. The latter are placed well away from town centers, however. The technique for dyeing was to extract the snails from their shells and put them into vats where their putrifying bodies excreted a yellowish liquid. This liquid, according to how much water was

Text continues on page 72

Life-size terra-cotta mask, sixth century B.C., may have been worn by a priest; copies are sold all over Italy.

Luxuriant, eclectic Phoenician art

Inspired by the Middle East, Egypt and Greece, plenty of precious gems and metals and their own superb adaptive skills, the Phoenician artisans created the diverse beauty pictured on these and the two following pages. Here, clockwise from the top left, are a gold-mounted scarab decorated with Egyptian gods; an earring with falcon and laden basket; a polychrome glass necklace; an amulet with the gods Horus and Anubis; a bracelet with winged beetle, palmettes and lotuses; and a necklace with beads and amulets. In the center are a gold necklace with an acorn pendant, and a crested ring that is designed to hold hair.

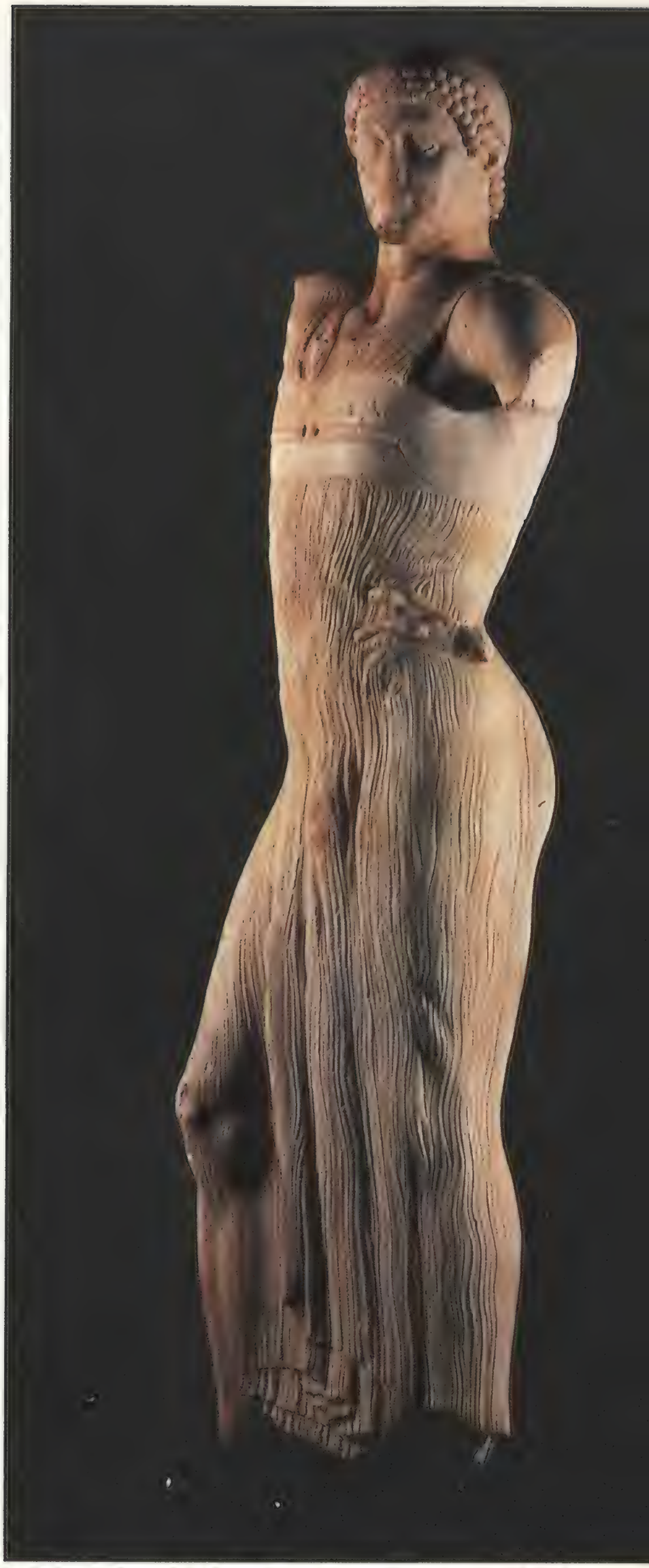
Detailed ornamentation of votive statuette, Ibiza, bespeaks Phoenician traders' ties to Eastern cultures.

Ivory plaquette represents cult of sacred prostitutes at the shrine of Astarte, goddess of love and war.

This serene bust, found in one of Punic world's largest yields of Hellenic terra-cotta, also came from Ibiza.

Phoenician sarcophagi were modeled on the Egyptian or Greek; this woman's head has curly Grecian hair.

Bell-shaped terra-cotta figures are typical of Sardinian necropolises, but iconography of this one is puzzling.



Marble "Youth of Motya," in Phoenician robe of fifth century B.C., created a sensation when found in 1979.

added, produced hues ranging from rose to dark violet. But the precious stuff stank to high heaven.

Also typical of Carthaginian cities was the tophet, a consecrated burial ground of infants and small animals sacrificed to the gods—in Carthage itself, primarily to the goddess Tanit and the god Baal. Phoenicians, like almost all others of their day, were polytheistic and seem to have had no specific word for religion. They had the term *qodesh* which may be translated as "sacred," and many of their gods and goddesses resembled Greek and Roman counterparts, as at Pyrgi with the Etruscans. Each city organized its public worship in its own way and selected its own pantheon.

Discovery of the vast tophet in Carthage horrified the Romans, but the practice went back much further; the Bible (II Kings 23) inveighs against the tophet in which children were sacrificed to the god Moloch (or Molech). Tophets have also been found on Motya and at five sites on Sardinia. Many scholars now believe that infant sacrifice was used, if at all, only in cases of dire emergency, when the fate of entire populations was at stake and the god could not be propitiated by less drastic rites. Some have suggested another theory entirely—that Carthaginians and their kin used sacrifice as a method of population control, to narrow the number of prospective heirs to family fortunes and holdings. Whatever the case, these consecrated burial grounds have yielded a wealth of stelae, votive objects, urns. Another of designer Aulenti's set pieces in the Venice show is a reconstruction of a section of the tophet in Carthage, and among other exhibits are treasures taken from those sad cemeteries.

Only three inches high, exquisite bowl from seventh century B.C. owes color to content of Phoenician sands.

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Long before the famous Punic Wars between Carthage and Rome ("Punic" comes from the Roman name for Phoenicians), Phoenicia west was having trouble with the Greeks, particularly in Sicily. As early as the sixth century B.C. they signed a treaty with young Rome, hoping to hold off the colonizing Greeks. It didn't help much. The burgeoning prosperity of little Motya attracted the belligerent attention of Dionysius, Greek tyrant of Syracuse, who brought down the city and destroyed it utterly in 397 B.C. Carthage was another alluring target, with its six-story dwellings, its mosaic floors, handsome gardens, city walls and rich hinterland. There is a passage from Diodorus that eloquently describes Greek envy: ". . . the villas were full of everything that contributes to the pleasures of life. . . . The land was cultivated partly as vineyards and partly as olive groves, and also abounded in other fruit trees. In the remaining areas, herds of cattle and flocks of sheep grazed, and the neighboring pastures were full of grazing horses."

Carthage also had elephants. In those years they were native to North Africa, and the city had elephant farms to produce beasts for its wars and ivory for its craftsmen. Elephants were introduced into Mediterranean warfare after Greeks had encountered them in India, but Carthage was the first to make them a normal component of her armies from the third century B.C. onward. Their most spectacular feat, to the delight of schoolchildren from that day to this, was Hannibal's famous crossing of the Alps with elephants in 218 B.C. Dramatic though it was, Hannibal seems to have had no more than 30 elephants when he started, and all but one of them died of the winter cold. Still, they had proved so effective that one clause in the peace treaty ending the Second Punic War was that Carthage must cease forever to hunt or capture North African elephants.

The Romans, never entirely comfortable at sea, met with defeats early in the first war, but learned fast. They studied and copied Carthaginian warships, and invented the *corvus*, a kind of gangway that could be thrown across like a grappling hook and provide passage for armed boarding parties. They finally won a stunning naval victory in 241 B.C., took over Sicily, forced Carthage to yield Sardinia and then exacted a crippling indemnity.

There was, however, a lot of fight left in a remarkable Phoenician family called Barca (the name meant "lightning"). The original Barca was Hamilcar, father of Hannibal, scion of a wealthy landowning Carthaginian family. With Sicily and Sardinia gone and other colonies in North Africa threatened, Carthage found itself about where the eastern Phoenician cities had been in 1200 B.C. The decision: salvation was, once more, *out*. Out this time to southern Spain, where Carthaginian colonies and forces were still strong. The Barcas moved there with their armies and their supporters, founded a new city, now called Cartagena, in 229 B.C. and made another treaty with Rome to divide

Bronze statue with gold leaf similar to these (second millennium B.C., Byblos) is featured in the exhibition.

Spanish territory. Hannibal, however, managed to pick a fight and, after having invaded Italy over the Alps, administered a series of crushing defeats on Roman armies—at Lake Trasimeno, at Cannae. In the end, however, he lost. Carthage itself fell finally to Rome and was destroyed in 146 B.C.

Thus even Phoenicia west passed into legend, leaving the ruins of great cities, the memories of mighty deeds, and thousands of beautifully wrought artifacts strewn about the Mediterranean to recall its passage.

In an evocative foreword to the blockbusting show catalog (765 pages, a couple of thousand photographs, about six pounds), Sabatino Moscati points out the exquisite rightness of Venice to host it: in glass manufacture, "the Phoenicians were significantly the precursors of the Venetians, and love for the sea and a determined will to explore unknown lands also bring Venice close to these great navigators of antiquity."

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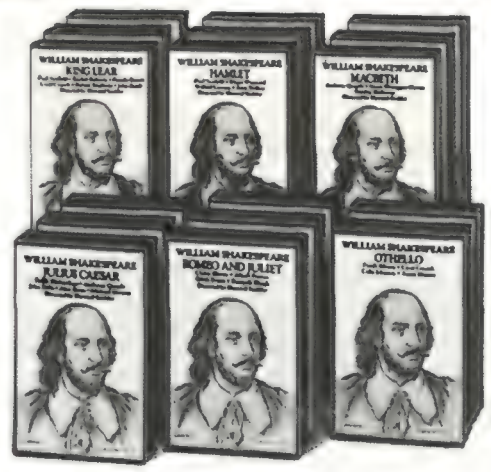

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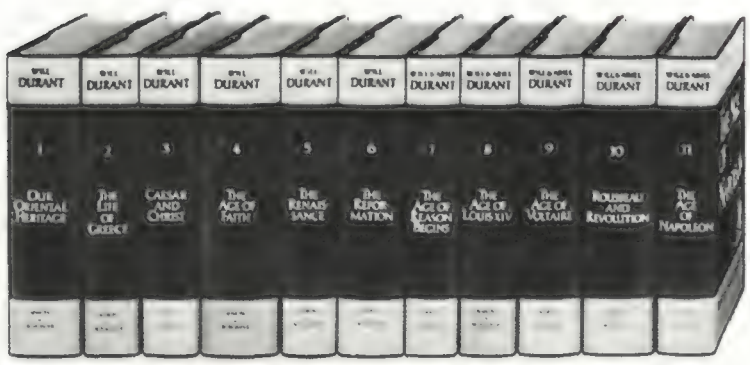

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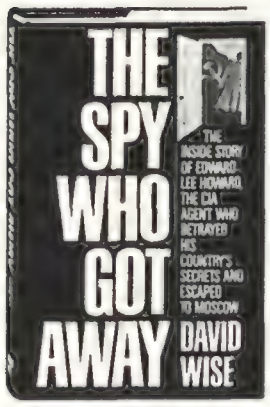
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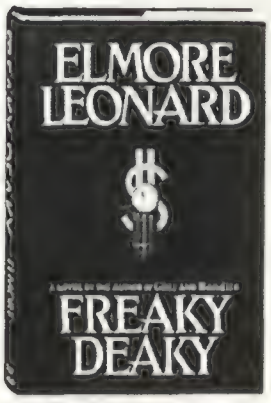

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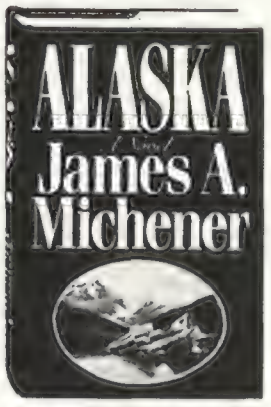

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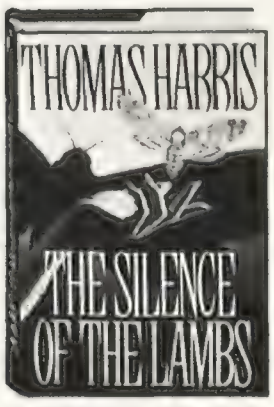

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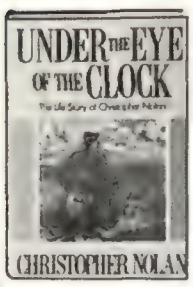

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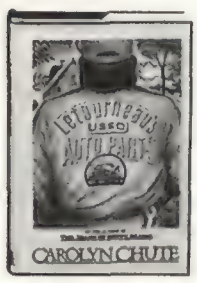

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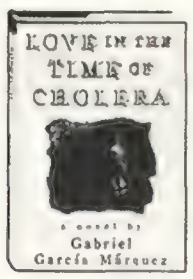

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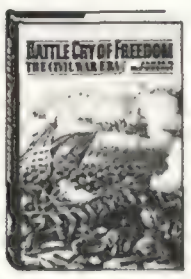

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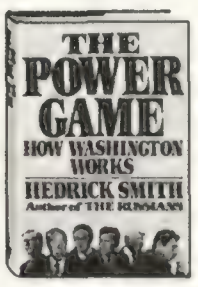

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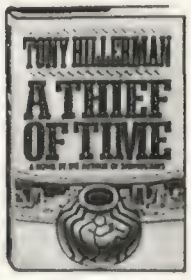

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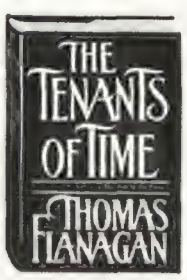

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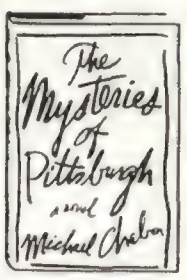

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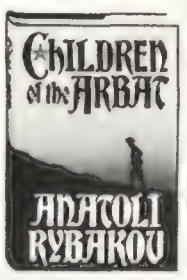

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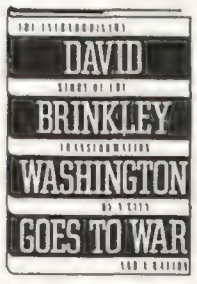

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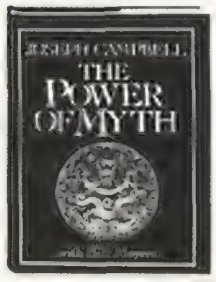

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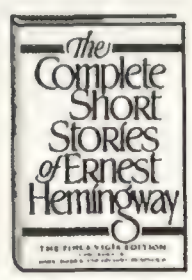

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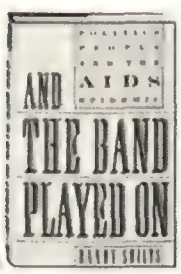

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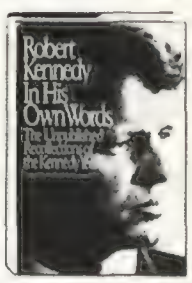

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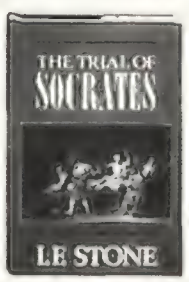

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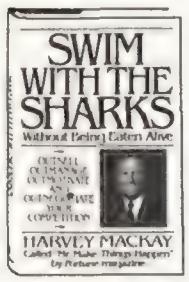

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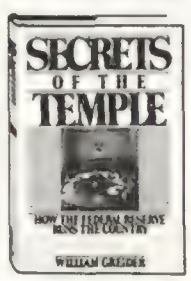

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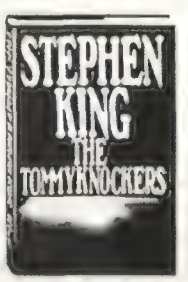

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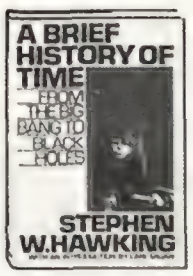

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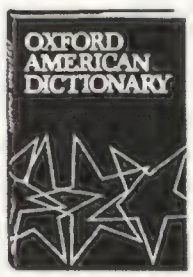

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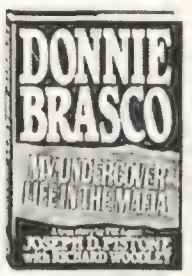

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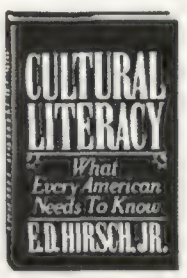

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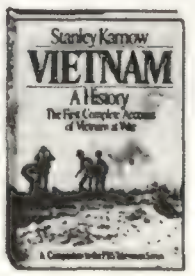

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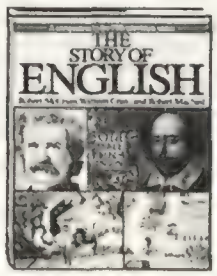

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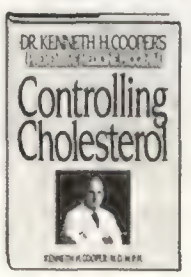

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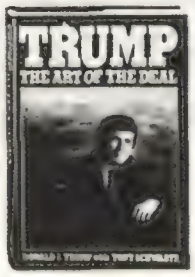

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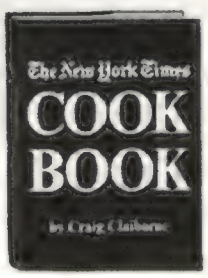

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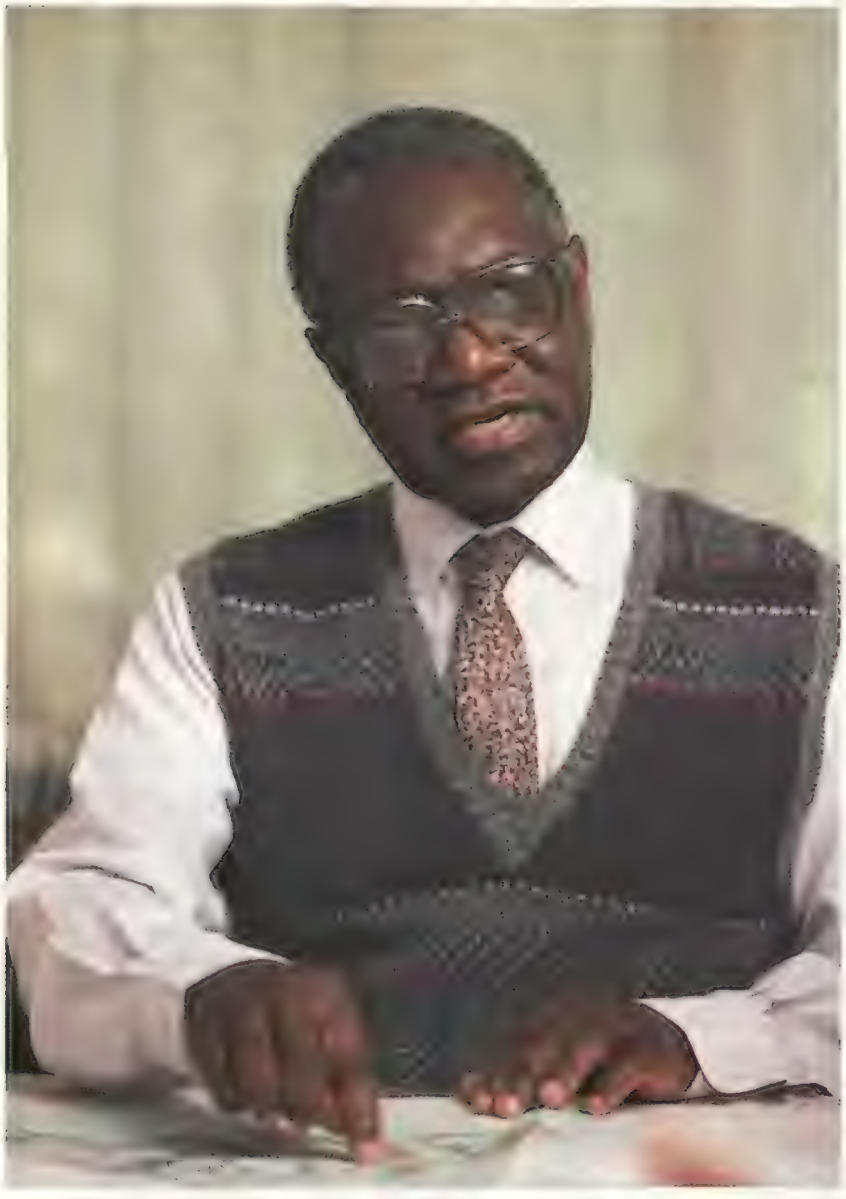
By Thomas A. Bass

Africa's drive to win the battle against insects

At ICIPE, entomologists combat the tsetse fly with ox-breath perfume, and wage war against crop pests with 'pheromone cocktails'



ICIPE director Thomas Odhiambo, a Kenyan, believes research will allow Africans to control their future.

If human beings live on this planet as the guests of green plants, then plants and animals can be said to survive—or fail to survive—as the guests of insects. Since the first cockroach appeared on Earth some 300 million years ago, insects have evolved into an estimated 30 million different species, of which one million have been discovered. Insects account for roughly 85 percent of all animal life, and it has been calculated that the combined weight of Earth's insects is 12 times greater than that of its human population.

In Africa the termites and ants alone outweigh all mammals put together. Between the mosquito and the tsetse fly, insects have dictated the lifestyle and distribution of human populations all across the continent. The Arabs penetrated as far into Africa as the tsetse fly allowed before sleeping sickness killed them and their horses. Armed with malaria and yellow fever, it was the mosquito that helped prevent colonial settlement in West Africa by turning it into "the white man's grave." But the people who have suffered most have been the Africans themselves.

Given the devastating impact of insects on tropical health and agriculture, it is surprising that there is only one international research institute in the world that devotes itself solely to the study of all kinds of arthropods, or joint-footed creatures. The International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, known as ICIPE, was founded 18 years ago in a Nairobi garage by Thomas R. Odhiambo, a Kenyan entomologist who hoped to build a "center of excellence" in Africa. ICIPE has grown since then into a $9-million-a-year institution employing 48 senior scientists, and 63 graduate and post-doctoral students. Its charismatic director and unusual research—on subjects such as how to induce abortions in tsetse flies or change the taste of plants to make them unattractive to crop pests—have put ICIPE on the map as a world center of insect research.

New research complex opens at Duduville

"The idea was actually very simple," Odhiambo told me about founding ICIPE. "Get the very best people and then, if you have more money, put buildings and equipment around them." Money has always been in short supply, so ICIPE's headquarters at the University of Nairobi consists of a few small buildings, and some rented houses and wood-frame barracks perched on the banks of the Masonga Wai River, which flows through the hillside campus. Working conditions are much better for the crop-pest researchers who occupy a field station more than 200 miles away on the shores of Lake Victoria, and life should improve for everyone else at ICIPE headquarters this month when a new multimillion-dollar complex opens at Duduville, whose name translates from the Swahili as "Bug City."

Field technician Robert Okech and farmer Grace Owili discuss use of insect-resistant seeds developed at ICIPE. She and her husband grow sorghum, maize and cowpeas despite high infestations of crop pests.

Photographs by Anthony Bannister

Insects are losing the war in Africa

Masai elder Babakamanga and his family assemble a tsetse trap capable of luring 20,000 flies a week.

Lake Magadi is tsetse country; Masai footprints on its soda-ash surface are the only sign of humans.

The four core programs at ICIPE concentrate on crop pests, livestock ticks, tsetse flies and the other insect vectors of human diseases. To small farmers, crop pests such as weevils and mites, shootflies and stem borers often make the difference between survival and famine. Ticks carry diseases that can kill a cow in three weeks. (ICIPE is developing an antitick vaccine that some people consider its most promising research.) Tsetse flies spread sleeping sickness across an area larger than the United States. Mosquito-borne malaria is a leading cause of death among children in tropical Africa. Solving any one of these problems would be a major accomplishment. ICIPE tackles all of them at once. Even the word "insect" is stretched to include arthropods, such as ticks and mites, that are technically distant cousins of insects.

A colleague described Odhiambo as the smartest man in East Africa. Another person said he was a visionary leader. My first meeting with Thomas Risley Odhiambo, who is from the countryside around Lake Victoria, lasted six hours. I was weary by the end, but as far as he was concerned, it could have lasted another six. A man in his mid-50s, Odhiambo is a precise and at times eloquent speaker with a recall of events down to the day and hour of their happening.

"Africa doesn't need any more fire brigades," he said as we sat in his office. "In an atmosphere of crisis it's natural to want to take shortcuts. Africa has been sold the idea that it can transfer technology from other parts of the world to solve its problems. But it won't work, and we've lost a quarter of a century because of this simplistic view. I believe that basic scientific re-

search is what will bring Africa to a position where it can control its destiny.

"Entomology is a key issue here because of the crucial impact of insects on tropical health and agriculture, but also because of their decided importance, if we want to make use of them, for food and other products. We have to move beyond our reliance on poisonous chemicals to the management of insects that might as well be our friends as our enemies."

One of Odhiambo's more intriguing ideas is this belief in the potential usefulness of insects. "There are obvious cases, like honey from bees," he said. "But did you know that termites make excellent chicken food? It seems sensible to incorporate insects into our livestock-production systems."

On finishing his graduate degrees at Cambridge University, Odhiambo returned to Africa to do research on tsetse flies and establish the entomology department at the University of Nairobi. Among his many talents, Odhiambo is an organizational genius who participates in scores of specialized societies and plays a major role in the Kenyan, African and Third World academies of science. But his greatest success—and the one that would become his life work—developed from an article he wrote in 1967 for *Science* magazine. Odhiambo argued that Africa had to embrace the scientific method—not just its technological results—if it wanted to get beyond the "legacy of the colonial interlude." He called for building "centers of excellence" in Africa as "powerhouses for the initiated and for those wishing to be initiated in research."

Using the model that led to the production of the birth control pill and, in just ten years, made Mexico a world center of steroid chemistry, Odhiambo came up with a plan. It was simple: start with an international multidisciplinary cadre of research fellows, choose the best scientists in the world to lead them as visiting directors, and then set everyone to work on problems with "ultimate economic payoff and a maximum multiplication factor" throughout the developing world.

Jacob Kinampet, a Masai technician, fills can with cow urine, an odor bait that attracts tsetse flies into trap.

Holding thousands of tsetse fly carcasses, Stepiten Ndeetu proudly displays evidence of the trap's success.

On specially designed machine, Sam Wallade observes reaction of male stem borers to female pheromones.

Technicians mix a safe pesticide that includes the crushed bodies of disease-infected stem borer larvae.

Mbita Point Field Station, located on Lake Victoria, houses numerous tick, tsetse and crop-pest projects.

With extensive help from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academy of Sciences and other U.S. friends, Odhiambo, a secretary and an odd-jobman declared themselves open for business as an international center in 1970. Academies of science from Sweden to Japan and a roster of entities from the World Bank to OPEC also joined in.

To better understand the work of ICIPE, I spent several weeks visiting laboratories and traveling into the field. Because its projects are scattered throughout Kenya, my visit turned into a scientific safari—only instead of the usual postcard varieties, the game being tracked just happened to be ticks and tsetse flies.

On one leg of my safari I drove south out of Nairobi over the Ngong Hills and down into the Rift Valley to Lake Magadi. This petrified pan of sodium carbonate shines like a glacier under the midday sun. On the far side of the lake stretches the Sambu Plain, a dry savanna that gives way to acacia woodland as we approach the towering blue wall of the Nguruman Escarpment. In Kenya, this side of the Rift Valley and all the fertile land below it belong to the tsetse fly. The arid shores of Lake Magadi have been left to the Masai pastoralists whose thornbush enclosures and mud-dung houses hug the few available shade trees.

"Tsetse" is the name given both to the 22 species of *Glossina* flies and to their unforgettable buzz by the Tswana people of the Kalahari Desert. The bite of one of these big flies is nasty but tolerable, unless it happens to be infected with the blood parasites that cause trypanosomiasis in humans or nagana in animals. The human form of the disease is known as sleeping sickness because the parasites, once they have crossed the blood

Writer Thomas Bass is finishing a book on science in Africa, to be published in 1989 by Houghton Mifflin.

New remedies are tested on nearby farms and on 50 acres of experimental tracts surrounding the facility.

Dr. Saini records observations of the flight of tsetse toward an odor bait he holds at one end of wind tunnel.

Staffers carefully weigh a farm cow as a part of the promising antitick vaccine project under way at ICIPE.

barrier into the brain, slowly sink their victims into a lethal doze. An epidemic of sleeping sickness early in this century killed 200,000 people on the shores of Lake Victoria and has remained endemic there. By spreading the animal form of sleeping sickness from the Kalahari to the Sahara, tsetse flies have reduced Africa's cattle-raising ability by 85 percent.

Camped below the wall of the Rift Valley in prefabricated barracks are a dozen ICIPE scientists who combine high-tech research and low-tech solutions in their effort to control the tsetse scourge. Robert Dransfield, the 37-year-old British zoologist who runs the project, said, "If the fix comes from outside, it isn't going to work." That Dransfield has managed to involve the Masai, who have a long history of resistance to outside meddling, verges on the miraculous.

Since 1905 there have been efforts made at tsetse control that have included stripping the land of vegetation, killing all the animals on which the fly feeds and bombarding the area from the air with pesticides. After devastating thousands of square miles, this method has only temporarily pushed back the tsetse fly from the outer limits of its range. Some of the land is being reinvaded, and in many places the fly may be developing genetic strains resistant to chemicals. "The scorched earth approach to tsetse control may really do more harm in the long run than leaving them there," Odhiambo tells me. "What we are trying to find is a way to make sure the blood parasite and the tsetse are not at the same place at the same time."

To find the answer, Dransfield and his team moved to Nguruman highlands in 1983. Aided by computer modeling, electric screens and odor-baited traps, they started counting flies and monitoring their infection rate. Ecologists dotted live flies with oil paint and then recaptured them later to estimate the size of the popu-

To count stem borers in a field, virgin moth is held in capsule (center), attracting males to pheromone trap.

lation. An epidemiologist wrestled Masai cattle to the ground and studied their blood for trypanosomes; four Masai Morans, young men trained as warriors, came to work as technicians.

In 1986 Dransfield moved from modeling the tsetse population to controlling it. Tsetse traps had been used in Africa since the 1930s. But two recent improvements have made them increasingly effective: the addition of color—contrasting shapes of blue and white being the most attractive—and the addition of odor, using ingredients in ox breath, buffalo urine or some other winning combination. Although there are probably as many trap designs being tested today in Africa as there are tsetse researchers, Dransfield's team developed possibly the most effective and most inexpensive one yet. A plastic bag, a handful of staples and a few feet of cloth are all that are required to build a device capable of trapping 20,000 flies a week.

Tsetse traps in Africa have a way of "disappearing" and being recycled for other uses. This is dangerous because many traps are impregnated with insecticides. Dransfield discussed the problem with his Masai neighbors, who solved it by marking traps with the same brands they use on their cattle. The task of maintaining them was assigned to the Morans, who incorporated it, along with animal tracking and cattle herding, into their warrior training.

I joined the Morans one morning while they checked some traps deep in the bush. The tangerine sky of an African dawn floated over the blue wall of the Rift Valley as we descended into a forest of wait-a-bit thorn, which made for slow going. With spears, pangas and a lot of high-spirited yelling, the Morans chased off the occasional buffalo that came crashing through the forest. My companions, who doubled as technicians trained in identifying trypanosomes through microscopes, were good enough at spear throwing to split a vine at 60 feet.

Tsetse flies are lured into tiny tents

Under a spreading crown of tropical figs, we came to our first tsetse trap. It looked like a tent for miniature extraterrestrials, with royal blue walls, a conical roof of nylon mesh and a chimney made from a plastic bag. Lured into the dark interior and then fooled into thinking they can escape through the plastic chimney, the flies die by the thousands. Seventy traps scattered over 62 square miles have already removed half of the million flies that once lived in the area. As a Masai woman who made some of the traps confided to me, "We've lived with them so long, it's hard to imagine what the world will be like without tsetse."

Another day I went to the sensory physiology laboratory to find Sam Waladde, head of the unit, and Phil McDowell, a researcher, crammed into a corner office chockablock with electronic gear. There wasn't room to sit facing one another, so we lined up two chairs and a stool in front of an apparatus resembling the juggernaut machine in Kafka's *Penal Colony*. A little dun-colored moth, condemned for doing tremendous damage as a stem borer, lay on a platform over which micropipettes were blowing air and pheromones. Hooked to the moth's antennae were microelectrodes wired into an electrophysiological recording machine. This instrument reads involuntary confessions at the cellular level from a moth's antennae or a tick's legs.

"We want to identify the full pheromone blend used by females to attract males for mating," Waladde says. "We are looking for a cocktail of molecules, called semiochemicals, as complex as the insect's language."

Pheromones are the molecular words used by insects to communicate among themselves. Plants communicate with insects using other chemical, tactile and visual languages. Once scientists learn these languages, they should be able to direct insects among plants like boxcars in a switchyard. The trick will be to get them off on the *wrong* track. A cloud of pheromones, which makes it impossible for males and females to find one

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another, is already used to control cotton moths in Arizona and California. ICIPE is experimenting with other pheromones that take advantage of insects being territorial. A sorghum shootfly, after laying her eggs on a seedling, will mark it with an odor that says "this space is taken." The next step for ICIPE entomologists is to make entire fields signal their unavailability.

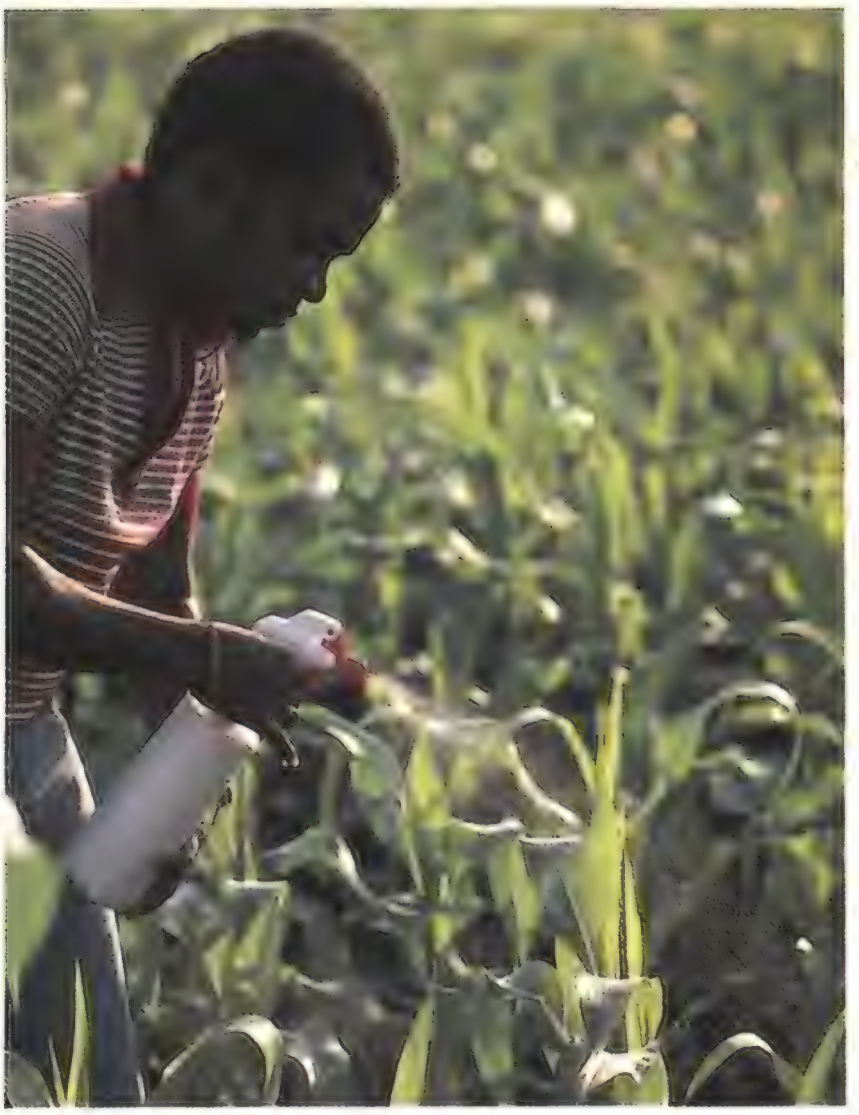
Chemical codes may be the most important, but a range of other signals—auditory, visual, thermal and tactile—also govern insect behavior. All of these are subject to ICIPE inquiry. Described to me as "the man with the tsetse love songs," Rajinder Saini was sweating in a closet-size room full of flies when I first met him. "They like it humid," he said, pointing to a chorus line of tsetses tethered in wax on a cardboard platform so that their antennae movement in response to chemical attractants could be observed. He handed me a set of earphones and asked my pleasure. "Feeding songs? Larviposition songs? Love songs?" By the time we finished the tape I could imagine their high-pitched whine serving as an exquisite tool of torture.

Other insect-borne threats to human health are tackled by ICIPE's program in medical vectors, which includes all the other biting flies and mosquitoes. The program is headed by Mutuku Mutinga, a former student of Odhiambo's. Mutinga's specialty is sandflies—innocuous creatures except for their ability to transmit various parasitical diseases known collectively as leishmaniases. Hundreds of thousands of people in the tropics suffer from either the cutaneous form of the disease, which resembles leprosy, or the visceral form, known as kala-azar, which invades the internal organs and eventually kills the victim.

Accidental encounters put humans at risk

Mutinga has discovered a wide variety of animal reservoirs for leishmaniases, including the hyraxes who live on Kenya's Mount Elgon, a tourist attraction. Hyraxes are hoofed animals distantly related to elephants but only the size of rabbits. Visitors to such wild areas may be oblivious of the fact, but medical researchers are acutely aware of the dangers whenever humans accidentally enter the natural cycle of disease transmission among animals. Mutinga recently advised government officials *not* to clear leishmaniasis-infected rodents from an irrigation project near Nairobi. The human population was thereby spared becoming a new target for biting sandflies, who were happy to continue feeding on rodents.

The crop-pest project was the last place I visited on my science safari and I flew there over the wall of the Rift Valley, across the manicured tea estates of the Kericho highlands and down to the steamy shores of Lake Victoria, where we landed at Homa Bay. An hour's bone-wrenching drive brought me to Mbita Point, a peninsula on which ICIPE has built its field station. Here, a few dozen researchers and students develop varieties of insect-resistant plants and other means of helping Africa's resource-poor farmers prevail against the insect world.



Maize plants are treated by Dr. Maurice Odindo, whose stem-borer-pathogen study is developing the spray.

I found Lu Qing Quang, a visitor from the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences. The Chinese have an extensive program for the biological control of insects, and ICIPE is trying to emulate their success. "We began recruiting insect pathologists a few years ago," Odhiambo told me, "on the speculation that if insect life is so rich and abundant in the tropics there must also be many natural pathogens. In other words, insects might be controllable by their own diseases."

On the list of promising pathogens are several viruses and microbes and even a nematode, or microscopic worm, that carries a bacterium toxic to crop borers. ICIPE has also found a fungus that does a very good job of eating its way through insect larvae. "I think the tropics are going to be a surprise in many ways," Odhiambo says, "and these are just some of the small surprises in store for us."

But it is one thing to identify an agent of biological

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Each spring Dr. Odhiambo (center) greets the entire ICIPE staff and talks of insects—the "dudu world."

control and another to get it to work in farmers' fields. Gilbert Oloo, the Kenyan scientist heading ICIPE's program in biological control, recently traveled around the world on a shopping trip for delivery systems. "The Chinese seem to have the best model. They operate at the level of the small farmer, where every commune is responsible for raising its own parasitoids."

An insect that develops and feeds on another insect, and when mature kills the host, is known as a parasitoid, and the star performer in China—although some are actually indigenous to Africa—is the trichogramma wasp. One of the smallest insects in the world, this wasp provides tremendous service to farmers by destroying the eggs of fruit- and corn-eating moths. "All across China, farmers breed trichogramma wasps and release them from here," says Lu Qing Quang, holding up a small plastic pagoda. Inside are sheets of waxed paper where the wasps are raised on oak silkworm eggs before flying out to do their work. "Instead of silkworm eggs, we'll use an artificial medium for growing wasps here in Africa," he says. "The principle will be exactly the same, but we might want to change the pagoda to some other shape."

To learn how ICIPE technology moves from lab to field and vice versa, I went out with Wellington Otieno on his rounds. An expert in biological control with a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley, Otieno was born and grew up in this part of Kenya. "With only 50 acres at Mbita Point, we have to work on our neighbors' fields," he said as we walked along a dirt road lined with wattle and thatch-roofed houses clustered in circular compounds. We came to a stand of bananas and acacias designed to serve as a barrier against grazing hippos; there, Atieno Ogutu greeted us. A compact woman with powerful hands, Mrs. Ogutu is not a resource-poor farmer. Her house has no electricity but it has a telephone, and she and her husband own enough land to rent some to ICIPE for experiments with nematodes and bacteria.

Like her neighbors, Mrs. Ogutu is an avid collector of improved varieties of maize. Most of her land she plants with one of ICIPE's insect-resistant strains, which are early maturing and yield before the rains give out. The rest she plants with hybrid seed, which is more susceptible to drought and insects. "The ICIPE variety tastes very good. But you know it's the wrong color," she told Otieno. "I hadn't thought about it," he said. "It's yellow, and we like our cornmeal white. We will look into this."

In 1981 ICIPE nearly collapsed under $1.6 million in debt. The excitement of its founding gave way to a bureaucratic retrenchment that saved the patient but left it irrevocably altered. "I was shocked when I first came," one entomologist remembered of the early days. "I was told I could work on anything I wanted, so long as it had to do with arthropods. If anybody thought about useful results, these were supposed to come as byproducts of studying fascinating problems."

In response to its fiscal crisis, ICIPE jettisoned some of its more theoretical work, mixed a strong dose of applied into its pure research and abandoned the idea of having visiting directors of research, who were replaced by permanent, if not quite so exalted, program leaders. Even though it has become more "mission oriented," the Institute remains the center of excellence Odhiambo envisioned, and there are certain sectors, such as the doctoral program for students from 14 African universities, that are now better than ever.

At the start of the long rains every spring, Odhiambo gathers the entire staff under a fig tree on the banks of the Masonga Wai to talk to them about insects—the "dudu world." The meeting resembles a large family gathering; ICIPE in many respects functions with the familial benevolence that characterizes personal relationships in Africa. A generation ago there was no scientific tribe in Africa. Odhiambo himself was the first black East African to publish a research paper in an international journal. This meeting provides another example of what he meant when he said, "The tropics are going to surprise us in many ways."

At the end of my last conversation with Odhiambo, I asked him if he's hopeful about the future. He replied, "To found an institute like ICIPE in a developing country with slender resources and other priorities one has to be an optimist, but a realistic one."

Alice Owili shows off aphid-resistant cowpeas from her father's field; they were developed at Mbita station.

By J. S. Bainbridge jr.

Devil's Island is still a synonym for hell on Earth

The walls are crumbling and the last surviving 'alumni' are in their 80s now, but the place retains its image as the toughest prison ever

In undated photograph, convicts begin what will almost certainly be a one-way trip to French Guiana.

After World War I a fast ship, fitted with steam pipes to scald rioting prisoners, made two voyages a year.

You had to know that Gaston Patoux once killed a man before you would really notice him.

Sporting a checked hat and rumpled jacket, his chin rough with gray stubble, Patoux looked like the other old men at the Catholic retirement home in downtown Cayenne. His gait was unsteady and his attention span brief. But his memory of the shooting was sharp.

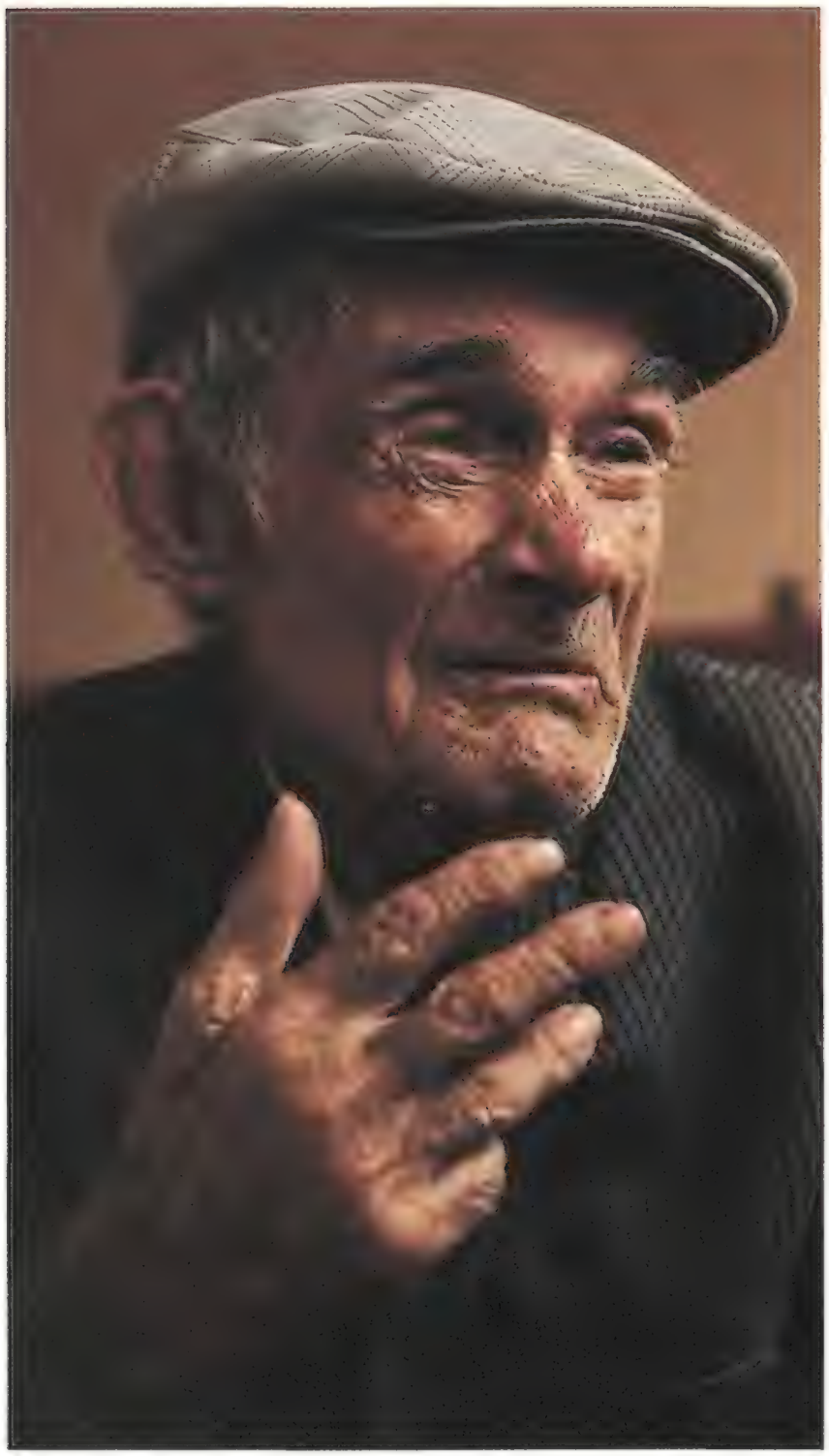
He said it was an accident, but the French courts saw it differently. In 1922 they shipped him off to spend 20 years at hard labor in the land of Devil's Island—the world's most infamous prison. Now, he was one of only about ten former *bagnards* (penal colony convicts) still alive in French Guiana. Most likely there are more back in Europe, but no one knows exactly how many. Whatever the number, they are old men; in another decade, they may all be gone.

In French Guiana's capital of Cayenne, Patoux had stature as an honored veteran—not of a war, but of a

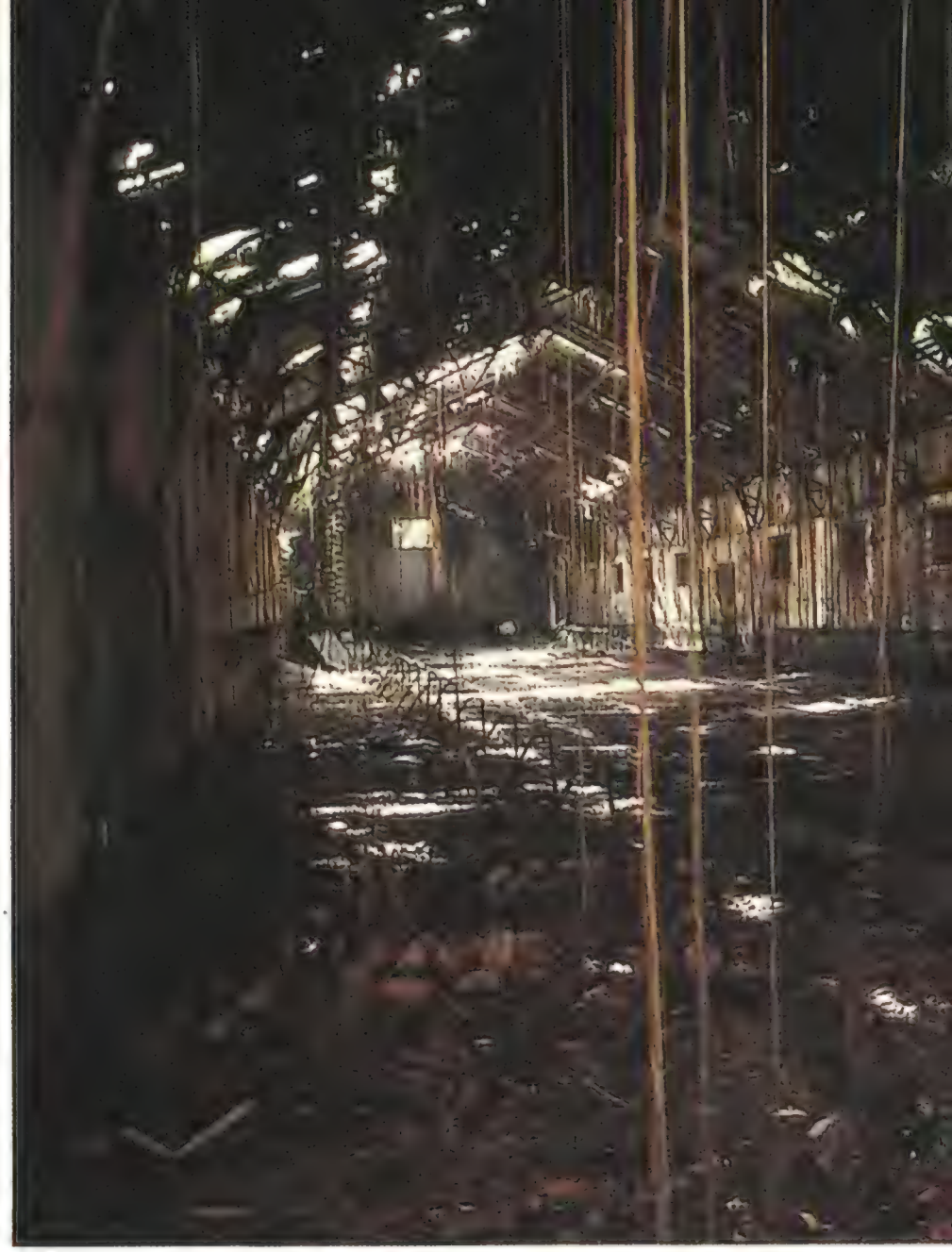
The interior of a solitary-confinement cell brightens as the door, the last one still in place, slowly rots away. Vegetation growing on top gives the impression that the prisoners were underground, but they were not.

Photographs by Jed Kirschbaum

Devil's Island: hell on Earth



Gaston Patoux, an 87-year-old ex-convict, died three weeks after this picture was taken in Cayenne.



Coconuts have fallen and vines have grown down through holes in the roof of a dormitory on St. Joseph.

system and a place that have become legend. France's former penal colony on the northern coast of South America continues to fascinate people, even though it was 50 years ago this fall that the last convict transport left Europe bound for French Guiana; a decade later, the last of the prisons there were closed. Still, chilling stories of escape, torture, heroism and death continue to come out. The most famous in recent years was *Papillon*, a personal account by a convict named Henri (Papillon) Charrière that became a best-seller and an acclaimed motion picture. Because Gaston Patoux had been part of the penal colony, people would listen to what he had to say.

It was true, he said; life in the old prison camps was hard. He had a job there once: to descend into a big hole for human sewage and empty the waste buckets handed to him. Sitting on a veranda outside his room, Patoux told of mean Corsican guards and how the *bagnards* were careful never to talk back to them for fear of being shot. Plenty of men tried to escape, but most were caught or died in the hostile seas and jungle that helped make French Guiana the destination all convicts feared.

Along the left, receding into the distance, are the remains of the iron beds on which prisoners slept.

Surf crashing on rocks made escape from the actual Devil's Island difficult; then there were the sharks.

Many of the stories you hear about the prison colony are tall tales, Patoux said. Others are true enough. "If I had to remember all that, I would not be able to keep on living," he added. "If all the stories were told, it would not end ever."

Patoux knew that he was one of the last of the old prisoners still alive. "There used to be lots of *relégués* [exiles convicted of multiple minor crimes] and convicts," he said, shaking his head. "But they are all dead now—all, all."

Patoux's voice trailed off and he looked tired. We'd talk more tomorrow, I told him. That would be fine, he nodded; come back as you wish. Haltingly, he shuffled off to the tiny room that was now his home.

For more than a century, "Devil's Island" has meant desolation and despair. The name conjures up images of dingy cells crawling with vermin, surrounded by jungle and watched over by soulless guards—a green hell from which death was the only escape.

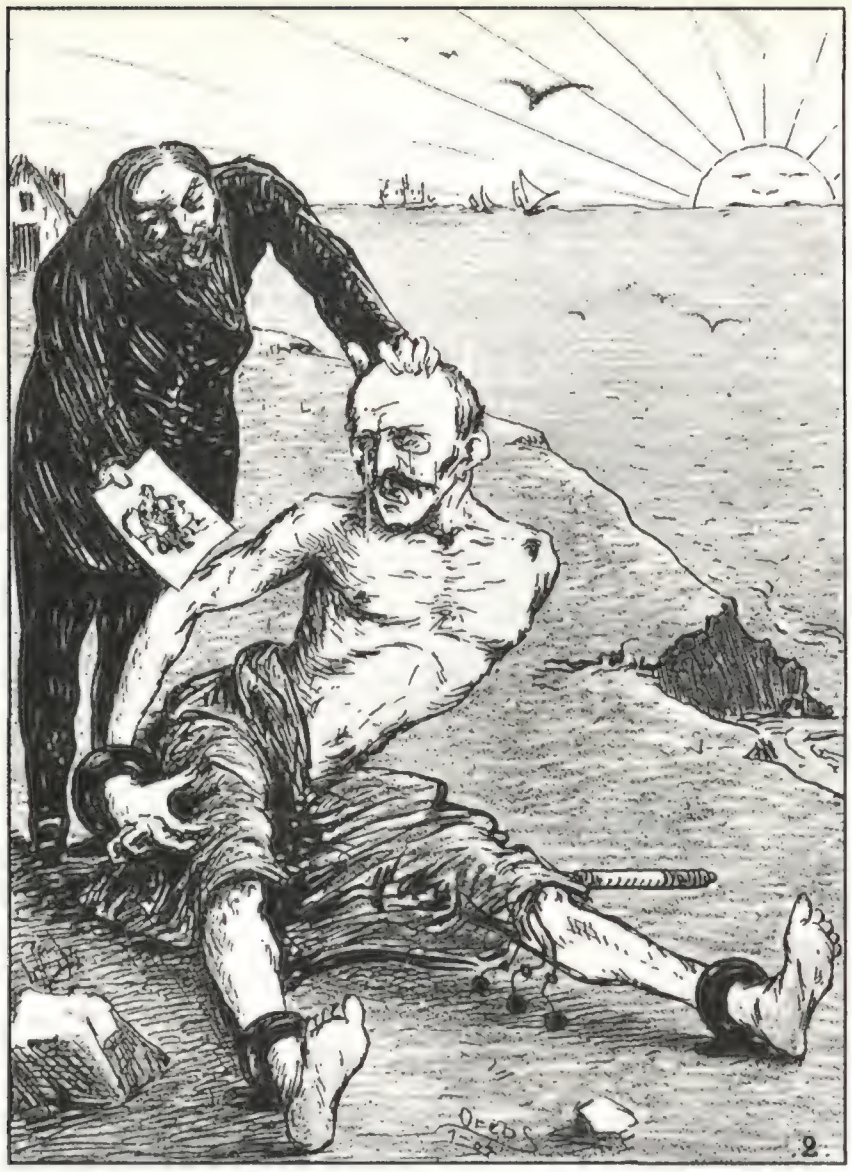
It was into this abyss that Capt. Alfred Dreyfus was thrown at the end of the 19th century on trumped-up charges that he had sold military secrets to the Germans. On a stone bench that is still there above the island's rocky shore he sat alone, facing France and mourning his fate, as the controversy over his conviction raged on the other side of the Atlantic. In the more than four years he suffered on Devil's Island, Dreyfus became the world's most celebrated inmate. Four decades later in *Papillon*, Henri Charrière claimed to have jumped from Devil's Island to a makeshift raft of coconuts, thus escaping the system that had banished him to a land Victor Hugo once labeled the "dry guillotine."

What is fact and what is fiction about the Devil's Island penal colony is not always clear. Some claim it was not so bad:

"During the years I spent in the [prison] I never met a guard who was especially nasty or sadistic," asserted Stanislas Surdykowski, a frail ex-convict of 84 years who now lives in a French Guiana hospital. He had heard the stories of how bad the place had been in the old days. "It was not worse than anywhere else," he told me. "To my mind the penal colony was in very good condition."

Surdykowski was sent to French Guiana in 1929, and after serving his ten years he went into the forest to work with men digging for gold. There were periods of time when he spoke to no one, he said, and his only companion was an aggressive and highly venomous snake. He was his own doctor, using the herbs of the forest to cure his ills. Forty years after his release, he returned to the towns. Life in the wilderness could be hard; life in the penal colony was not so bad.

A slight man, bent over with age, Surdykowski glared with fire when asked why he was sent to French



Henri Charrière, alias Papillon, stands in dock during trial at which he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

During a punishment session on Devil's Island, Alfred Dreyfus is shown a picture of his family in France.

Guiana. Although he talked freely about his life in the penal colony, he sharply refused to say why he had been imprisoned. "It's over now; it's the past. . . . All I know now is that I am rehabilitated."

Stories we all hear of French Guiana, including the tales in *Papillon*, are filled with fantasies, Surdykowski said. "They told things that did not happen. They embellished the story. They presented it as a hell. They wanted . . . to attract the public."

Although accounts and even histories of French Guiana differ, one fact is undisputed: Devil's Island itself is only one of three tiny spots of land about nine miles off the French Guiana coast, and it was a place reserved for only a handful of prisoners at a time. The vast majority of the 70,000 convicts sent to French Guiana served their sentences somewhere other than the true Devil's Island. Ironically, the three-island cluster, once known as Devil's Islands, was renamed the Iles du Salut—Islands of Salvation. They were called that by members of an ill-starred colonial expedition in the mid-18th century who fled there from the mainland where the colonists were being decimated by tropical diseases. The group named two of the islands: Royale, for their king, and St. Joseph, for their patron saint. The third and most forbidding kept the name Devil's Island, supposedly for the rough seas that hurled against it from all sides, making a landing there nearly impossible except in the best weather. It was the last time the islands would be salvation for anyone.

In 1852, Emperor Napoleon III decided to close two prisons in France and send their inhabitants to the Iles du Salut. Part of the idea was to rid France of unsavory characters, but there was another purpose as well. By edict, all prisoners with sentences of eight years or more would have to spend the rest of their lives in the colony; a convict serving a shorter term would have to stay there after his release from confinement for a period of time equal to his original sentence. France hoped that these *libérés* would form the backbone of a new French colony much as the English had done with Australia.

The colony needed help to survive. Four years earlier, slavery had been abolished in French territories, and Africans brought to work on French Guiana's plantations left their jobs for the jungle, where they set up independent villages. In 1850, Asians were added to the population partly to fill the labor gap; the work didn't suit them and they became shopkeepers.

The new plan to supply the colony with prisoners was considered by many to be a humanitarian gesture. A French official called it "one of the most generous ideas of the century," one that would allow convicts

Baltimore writer J. S. Bainbridge jr. described the discovery of a leatherback turtle nesting area in French Guiana in SMITHSONIAN, *September 1974.*

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ABOVE AND BEYOND℠

Jacek Baron, who killed his superior in the French Foreign Legion, now runs a library in the hospital.

Stanislas Surdykowski, who refuses to discuss his crime, denies the prison was worse than elsewhere.

to shed their chains and lead productive lives in the healthful climate they would find on the Iles du Salut. Their world would no longer be dreary French dungeons but the "eternal springtime" of a lush and wholesome land. Prisoners were told they could volunteer for French Guiana, and most were willing to leave French prisons. In 1852, two thousand convicts left France for the new penal colony.

What started as a small penal settlement on the Iles du Salut soon spread to large camps on the mainland coast and even to the dense jungle of the interior. Eventually prisoners sent to French Guiana would be divided into three basic types: *bagnards, relégués* and political exiles. Even the Iles du Salut would be classified according to purpose: Royale was for incorrigibles; St. Joseph was for men condemned to solitary confinement; Devil's Island, once a place of exile for lepers, was reserved for political prisoners.

The colonization plan did not work well. For one thing, instead of a supply of productive workers, the *libérés* were becoming a subclass of shiftless poor. When they were given *libéré* status, prisoners still could not really become independent.

"Free, but free only to stay in Guiana," wrote René Belbenoit, a convict whose tales of prison life in the colony made headlines in the 1930s. "Not free to go where you want, to take up human life again, to see your friends, to start all over again to build something from the wreckage. Not free to pull yourself up out of the mud and disgrace and begin a new life. Free only of the cells, of the punishment camps, of the vile barracks. Free to live in Guiana—where there is no means of living!" Convict labor did most of the work; there was little left for the *libérés.*

"More than half would quickly break and die"

Tropical diseases were ravishing the population: "Men who had never had an ax in their hands were put to work chopping down huge trees in the heart of the tropics," wrote Belbenoit. "For them a miserable existence now began, a frightful life under which more than half of them would quickly break and die. . . . These unfortunates who came from a cold climate and were made to work in a humid jungle, who had to endure the burning sun, who were bitten incessantly by mosquitoes and other pests, who were drenched from head to foot by the daily rains, found themselves undernourished, badly housed and indifferently treated; all down through the years, since 1852 it has been the same."

While prisoners could not fight the climate, they could fight each other. The "axiom of life in French Guiana is every man for himself," according to Belbenoit; "self-interest reigns supreme and is at the bot-

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A solitary cell had only bars for a ceiling; guards could check it from a catwalk on top of the building. The prisoners might be locked in for as long as five years; those who went insane were kept apart.

tom of every action." Convicts killed one another mercilessly for the small canisters—called *plans*—into which they put money and other valuables for safe storage up their rectums. To be sent to French Guiana was a death sentence.

Over the years, the penal settlements of French Guiana came under increasing public attack. Calls went out for their abolition as more and more "revelations" were published. Finally, in 1938, France announced that it would send no more convicts to South America, although it was not until the late 1940s that all the penal settlements of French Guiana finally closed down.

Now the South American rain forest from which the prisons of Dreyfus, Charrière and Gaston Patoux were carved is recapturing the land. Walls that broke men's wills are slowly being pulled apart by jungle creepers that find the tiniest crevices. A coconut grove has taken root inside a vast dormitory where iron cots once stretched row on row. Only a few buildings may survive into the next century.

On the dread punishment island of St. Joseph the doors to all but one of the solitary confinement cells are gone. Rotted and rusted, they have crumbled to the floor. In their place are the delicate webs of tropical spiders, which find the now-gaping portals ideal for snaring prey.

On St. Joseph the worst of the convicts suffered alone in silence, often for years at a time. After 1926 each prisoner in solitary was given 30 minutes a day in the courtyard. "It is the only time when he can see the sky," wrote Belbenoit. "The rest of the day he lives in dim light; from dark to dawn—blackness and silence. He is alive in a tomb."

After the half-hour solitary strolls in the courtyard, wrote Francis Lagrange, a convicted forger and art counterfeiter, prisoners "lay on the wooden boards of their cots, their legs fettered to an iron bar, or huddled miserably on the stone floor of their cells, staring up at the shaft of light coming from one small aperture in the ceiling, waiting, waiting, if only for the next meal."

The only voices convicts in solitary heard were the screams of fellow prisoners whom the ordeal had driven mad. Now the silence of the empty cellblocks is overwhelming. The only sounds come from nature:

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tropical rain on broad-leaved plants, sea breezes stirring trees grown out of control and from all sides the constant surf hammering the rocky coast.

Devil's Island itself has been abandoned for years. The cottages and Dreyfus' stone bench can still be seen through the trees. But the seas that kept the 18th-century colonists away do the same for today's visitors. Only on the calmest day can the island be approached, and even then with caution. The currents are too swift and the waves too strong. In addition there are the sharks, though perhaps not as many as when they were fed dead prisoners from reusable coffins at dusk.

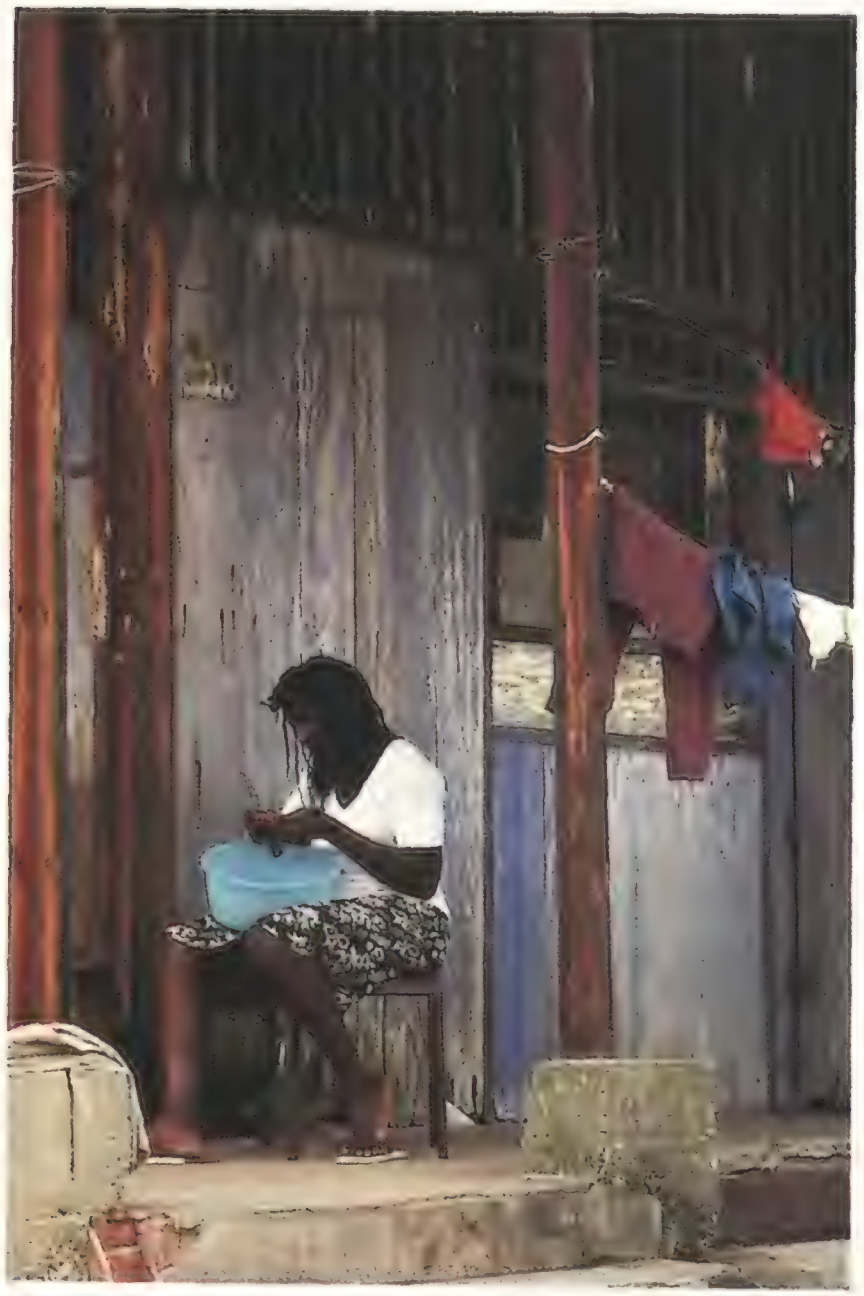
A cable once connected Royale with Devil's Island, but that, too, is now gone. It was the only way that the island could be regularly supplied, since the surrounding seas were so rough. Once in the 1930s, according to legend, the cable broke. A guard ordered a convict named Saviory, who was a superb swimmer, to brave the seas and retrieve one of the ends. When Saviory balked because the water was too treacherous, the guard unholstered his revolver and ordered him to dive into the sea or be shot. The current swept the swimmer away; his shark-bitten body turned up on shore the next day.

Escape was always on the mind, except for those who had abandoned all hope or who had become content with the minimal life they led. Alexander Miles, a Long Island native who has lived for years in French Guiana and has studied the history of the prisons, said recently that about a dozen men did manage to get off the islands, but they were all caught after they reached the mainland. There were many successful escapes from mainland camps, however.

In the town of St.-Laurent-du-Maroni, by the banks of the muddy Maroni River, which separates French Guiana from Suriname, can be found the remains of the Camp de la Transportation, where convicts sent from France first set foot on South American soil. Here, twice yearly starting after World War I, *La Martinière*, an erstwhile German freighter refitted with cages to keep convicts under control, would dock after its 15-day crossing from France. The ship, nicknamed the "cage for lions," had been made especially swift for that era because prison officials feared that long voyages might tempt the men to revolt before reaching the colony. Just in case, steam pipes were installed so that rebellious convicts could be scalded into submission.

Dating from the 19th century, the transportation camp was where new arrivals were classified and dispersed to various destinations throughout the colony, including the Iles du Salut more than 100 miles down the coast. Now it is home to squatters, to refugees from recent disorders in Suriname, and to a few people who claim a legal right to live in the derelict cellblocks.

Decay is not everywhere. At least some of the prison buildings are being saved. Royale, the largest of the Isles du Salut, now boasts a small, spartan auberge where one can spend a night or two in renovated guard's quarters. It is the only place where tourism seems to be seriously trying to take advantage of the former penal colony's notoriety.



Muriel Vanas prepares food while visiting refugees from Suriname in what was the transportation camp.

Forgeries of a prison cup used by Dreyfus

Tourists, mostly French, can dine and relax on the island, and fish in water far clearer than the murky rivers and shore of the mainland. They can even buy T-shirts adorned with prisoner caricatures (animals in striped garb behind bars) or Iles du Salut logos to show the folks back home where the wearer has been. Souvenirs from the prison islands are nothing new. When the colony was in full operation, convicts and *libérés* would sometimes sell trinkets they made to sailors and soldiers who happened to pass through. The men even tried to hawk banged-up prison cups inscribed

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so that the buyers would believe they were once owned by Dreyfus.

Efforts to fix up Royale's old hospital and church—both adorned with artwork by Francis Lagrange—are under way. A few dozen yards away, space-age construction contrasts sharply with the penal colony's past: the European agency that launches satellites from the mainland has installed a rocket-tracking camera system next to some crumbling cellblocks.

Léon Bertrand, the mayor of St.-Laurent, who was recently elected to the French Assembly, hopes to turn the transportation camp into a tourist complex in the next few years. One section of the camp has been cut off from the rest, and renovation has begun. There have been negotiations with Club Méditerranée over a much larger project, he said, though a Club Med official in New York said nothing is being planned.

Henri Charrière, who made a fortune telling horror stories about the penal colony, would have loved the idea that the place he tried so valiantly to flee might become a tourist attraction.

"I think that if he were still alive and if he had come here, he would have taken the opportunity to make a star of himself," said Roger Dufay, an 81-year-old former convict who now sells mounted butterflies from a storefront in St.-Laurent. Banished as a *relégué*, Dufay was on the same voyage that brought Charrière to the colony.

Netting French Guiana's beautiful butterflies, especially the morphos with their luminous blue wings, was a common occupation for convicts and *libérés*. For the convicts, they were an income; it was hard to accumulate money in the penal colony, and a little cash went a long way for food and tobacco—or perhaps toward starting a nest egg for an escape. Dufay's advancing years brought his butterfly-hunting days to a close and forced him back to St.-Laurent; now he must rely on Indians for his supply. But he still mounts them himself, gingerly pinning their delicate wings to a board.

Next to the transportation camp is a sprawling hospital complex, another veteran of penal colony times. But unlike the prison, the hospital is still in operation. Two of its residents—Surdykowski and Jacek Baron—are former *bagnards* living their final years only yards from the pier from which they stepped more than a half-century ago to begin their sentences.

Baron left his native Poland for the Foreign Legion in Morocco, where he killed a man. The man was a German, Baron told me in self-expiation. The problem was that the German was his superior officer in the Foreign Legion, and World War II was still a long way off. The officer had struck Baron, who told him, "You beat me once, you beat me twice, but you won't beat me three times." When the man hit him again, Baron ran a bayonet through his chest.

Baron was put to work in St.-Laurent where he served as a baker in the transportation camp. From his window he used to watch prisoners executed on the portable guillotine—called the "merry widow"—erected for such occasions in an adjacent alleyway.

For a while, Baron also was in charge of the transportation camp's library, which was filled with French books and magazines dating from World War I. Now he runs a little library at the hospital just down the hall from his room. With great pride he lends his eclectic collection to sick people, friends and even doctors. "I know some people borrow but they don't bring them back," he said sternly.

Baron's eyes lit up when the two young daughters of a French couple working at the hospital came by on their bicycles. They reminded him of his two sisters, whom he never saw again after he was shipped to French Guiana; along with his Jewish mother, they became victims of World War II. After he was released in the 1940s, Baron stayed in French Guiana. The Europe he knew had gone forever.

Hoping that Gaston Patoux would be rested and ready to tell more about his life and the penal colony, I went back to the retirement home in Cayenne the day after he and I had conversed. However, a nurse told me that Patoux had fallen down and reinjured an old fracture. He had been taken to the hospital and was in no shape to resume our talk.

The conversation Patoux and I had started remained unfinished. Within three weeks of my visit the roster of old prisoners dropped one more notch, as Patoux died at the age of 87.

Ex-convict Roger Dufay sells butterflies. He once caught them himself, now relies on Indians for stock.

By Diane Raines Ward

Flowers are a mine for a spice more precious than gold

Saffron, the world's costliest condiment, was the Middle East's gift to gourmets; now it comes chiefly from the 'arrogant crocus' of Spain

Because of their fragility, flowers must be picked by hand and held so that the stigmas are not crumpled.

"The saffron is an arrogant flower," begins an old Spanish zarzuela named for this lush, purple blossom. "It is born with the sunrise and dies at sunset." For a couple of weeks in October of every year, in Spain's La Mancha region, the arrogant crocus is harvested frenetically, as fast as it flowers.

For saffron is the world's most precious spice, often rivaling, ounce for ounce, the cost of gold. A pound of its tiny threads—the stigmas, or female organs, of *Crocus sativus*, an autumn crocus—currently costs well over $2,000. There is such a demand for these little fibers the Spanish call "red gold" that virtually all that is grown will be sold.

La Mancha takes its name from the Arabic *al-Manshah*—the parched land—but every fall when the crocus blooms its desiccated ocher fields are awash in a sea of color that ranges from purple to violet to lavender. This, the land of Don Quixote, is still largely untouched by the industrial age. Its golden brown hills are striated with vineyards and olive groves, punctuated with waterwheels and dusty towns the color of earthenware. Miguel de Cervantes chose these hills and the Castilian plain from which they rise for the wanderings of his romantic, hallucinating knight.

Here in the town of Consuegra, Don Quixote's legend seems especially alive. A 12th-century castle perched on a rocky hill dominates the town's skyline, and on a hazy evening, six fine white windmills quite resemble giants.

I have come to La Mancha to see the saffron harvest, and Consuegra is one of Spain's important saffron towns. It is the middle of October. The harvest should be at its peak, but there is not a sign of a blossom. The fields are brown and dry.

A farmer, dressed in the bright blue coveralls worn by workers throughout Spain, drags his rake over a plot of seemingly empty earth. Not so. Nieves Gutierrez is aerating his crocuses. He will make a significant portion of his year's income, perhaps 20 percent, in the next two weeks, and he is typical of the 400-odd saffron growers of Consuegra. Unusual cold and late rains have postponed the harvest, he tells me, but the crocuses will soon be in bloom.

He is right. A few days later that same strip of ground has become a purple plain. Even the clouds in a brilliant blue sky seem to reflect the color of the fields below.

One reason for its great cost is that saffron is still cultivated and harvested as it has been for millennia—by hand. Each morning at dawn farmers and their families, the poorest people of this arid Spanish tableland, spill out into the fields on foot, by bicycle, motorcycle, tractor and rickety truck. With a balletic rhythm, men, women and children bend low to pluck the tiny blossoms and drop them into wicker baskets suspended

The red stigmas from all of these crocus blossoms would be a minuscule addition to those on the plate.

Photographs by Kay Chernush

Harvesting begins at dawn in this *celemín* near Consuegra and continues until lunchtime, when the searing sun calls a halt. Resuming in late afternoon, the pickers will press on until the field is cleared.

from their waists. This backbreaking scene is repeated over and over, day after day, because that arrogant crocus wilts and its stigmas become worthless unless picked within hours of coming into full bloom.

The flat, open, scrub landscape from Toledo to Albacete offers optimum conditions for crocus cultivation: a moderate climate with rich, well-drained sandy or loamy soil, and adequate rainfall. Every four years the corms are dug up, cleaned and separated, then set out in another plot, allowing the depleted ground to lie fallow for ten years. Small plots called *celemines*, only 5,000 square feet or so, abut walls, hills, buildings and often intersect fields planted with other crops. Each *celemín* will yield about a pound of saffron.

Planting, hoeing, harvesting, stripping the stigmas and roasting—all are done by hand. During the two weeks of harvest, stripping and roasting occupy the entire community. Streets, olive groves, vineyards are deserted. A bonus rather than a survival crop, saffron often buys luxuries such as a television or a new oven. And since it stores well, it can be hoarded as a hedge against hard times, or held hostage for a better price.

Those who cultivate and pick the crocuses lease —or may own—the land. Despite backs aching from bending and faces burned by the merciless Castilian sun, the Consuegrańos pick with unfailing good humor, shouting across to one another and greeting every passer-by. By late afternoon the fields will have been picked clean, only to be covered in lavender again the next morning. After processing, the crop will be marketed through a time-honored network of village brokers, middlemen, big-city producers and exporters.

Invading Arabs had introduced saffron to the Iberian peninsula by the 10th century A.D.; *azafrán*, the Spanish word for saffron, is from the Arabic *za'farān*. Spain has been exporting saffron ever since the 14th century; with 70 percent of world production, it now controls the market.

For centuries before its advent in Iberia saffron had been an important luxury item in Persia as well as a valuable trade item along the spice routes of Asia. The ancient Phoenicians dedicated saffron cakes to the

The author, a free-lance writer based in New York, covers the arts and sciences. She is now at work on The Muses, *a book about artists and their inspiration.*

No longer used to grind grain, picturesque windmills overlooking Consuegra evoke spirit of Don Quixote.

goddess Astarte, and tiny bits of stigmas have been found in Egyptian mummies. Cleopatra, in fact, used saffron in her cosmetics.

It is mentioned by Homer, Pliny the Elder, Hippocrates, Chaucer and Shakespeare. In the Middle Ages, Britain's Edward III introduced the crocus to the farmers of Essex and soon, in the town of Saffron Walden, those who cultivated the little flower were called "crokers." Saffron buns have long been popular with Britons. Francis Bacon observed that "the English are rendered sprightly by a liberal use of saffron in sweetmeats and broth." In America, the *Medical Companion*, published in 1838, went even further, claiming that "it exhilarates the spirits when taken in small doses, but if used in too large potions, it produces immoderate mirth."

Variously lauded as a flavoring, digestive, dye, sedative, hangover cure, exhilarant and even aphrodisiac, in our century its uses are largely culinary. The Arabs, saffron's greatest consumers, use it to flavor lamb, chicken and rice dishes. It is vital to France's bouillabaisse and Italy's risotto. In Spain, saffron's most popular use is in paella, that superb combination of rice, chorizo, fresh seafood and poultry. After Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the United States, that crossroad of the world's cuisines, is the largest importer of saffron.

"While the taste is very subtle, saffron gives a dish the aura of special occasions," according to Indian actress and gourmet cook Madhur Jaffrey. "I use it for its aroma, which to me is headily sweet, and for its color, which in India is thought very auspicious."

The women of Consuegra put saffron in their stews, soups and rice dishes, but one does not find it in local restaurants. At Hostal del Cardenal in Toledo, proprietor José Gonzalez Martín insists that saffron is not indigenous to Castilian cuisine and, anyway, it is much too expensive.

An innovative user of saffron is the American chef Richard Stephens from Decatur, Illinois, who owns La Gamella restaurant in Madrid. "The Spanish are such traditionalists it does not occur to them to use saffron in dishes other than those they know well, usually paella," he says. "Saffron makes almost everything taste better." It's in his brioche and in his cold white bean salad. Stephens also prepares poached salmon topped by a delicate butter sauce laced with vivid saffron threads. "There is a great difference in quality," he cautions. "I am very careful of the saffron I buy. If it is brown or inexpensive it is most likely old, badly packed or even adulterated."

There is no such thing as cheap saffron, so it is frequently cut with other substances—turmeric, marigold or safflower petals, even bits of wax and molasses. Kashmir, the world's second-largest producer, offers a reward of 101 rupees for information about adulteration. Some saffron adulterators were burned at the stake in 15th-century Germany; others were beheaded

Crocuses await transport to strippers. Muddy boots testify to soggy harvest season; hoe is for weeding.

Señora Pasquela, at left, keeps a watchful eye on this roasting saffron; too much heat destroys the aroma.

and several were buried alive. Nowadays such unscrupulous folk are simply prosecuted.

Buying saffron threads from a reputable dealer is the best way to ensure that you are getting the real thing. Their color is distinctive, a dark bright red, and the smell has been described as pungent, slightly bitter, musky. Genuine saffron is sold in tiny jars and vials, and is usually stored out of sight, under counters, in back rooms, even in safes. At Macy's, .008 ounce or .25 gram costs $3.50; based on a per-dish use, that's about $1 for a pudding, $2 for a bouillabaisse and $3 for a biryani, an Indian dish similar to pilaf and made with spiced meat. Philip Teverow, who buys saffron for Manhattan-based food importers and distributors Dean & DeLuca, believes it enhances almost any cuisine. Because the Spanish crop was relatively poor in 1987, Teverow thinks that the price may more than double this year.

The quality of saffron depends a great deal on where it is grown and how it is handled. In little Membrilla, a group of women sit around a long wooden table in front of a brushwood fire in the tiled house of hard-working farmer Leonardo Alvarez. The room is fragrant with the scent of hundreds of thousands of crocus blossoms. It is from this district, near the market town of Manzanares, that the very best Mancha Selecto comes, setting the standard for all the saffron in Spain.

The women deftly turn back the violet petals and lift from each flower three precious red stigmas, which they drop onto small plates. It takes considerable skill to avoid damaging the delicate threads. Blossoms are piled high the length of the table and the women's feet and legs are buried in discarded flowers. Stripping, like the picking, must be done immediately, before the crocuses wilt. These ladies—along with a few men—will work long into the night throughout harvest time, sometimes catnapping in their chairs. Although the sandy soil here is rich and produces large blossoms, it takes 70,000 to 100,000 to amass one pound of dried saffron stigmas, and even the fastest worker can strip only ounces in a day.

Young, old and middle-aged, these voluble workers are friends and relatives of the wiry Leonardo and his wife, Anna. They gossip, tell stories, tease one another, and complain about aching backs and numb behinds. Their wages will be in saffron, and therefore all the plates are carefully marked: Catalina, Dolores, Josefa, Eliza, Juana, Gema, Marie-Carmen. Meticulously, Leonardo will divide the contents into quarters and each woman will keep one-fourth of her yield as payment for her labor.

Saffron is an important crop in this town of 7,000 that also produces wine, grain and melons. "Two thou-

At table, tired Consuegraños, attended by younger generation, carefully extract stigmas from blossoms.

After grower divides stigmas into piles, stripper may choose, as wages, the one that appears to be the largest.

sand to three thousand pounds of saffron are shipped from Membrilla each year," says Leonardo. "That's very important to the economy, especially to those who pick and strip. We do not receive good prices. The big money goes to the brokers and the producers. In the past few years especially, there has been much work for little money."

Although he doesn't want his four sons to follow him into this line of work because it is so hard, Leonardo has hopes for the future. Earlier attempts to form a cooperative failed. "We were uneducated and too trusting," Leonardo explains. "But a wine cooperative has been successful here and Spain's joining the European Common Market will help all agriculture."

He takes great pride in his special care with saffron. His workers pick away the tiny white bottom of the stigma, often left attached elsewhere although it only adds weight. In the early hours of the morning Leonardo carefully roasts the previous day's crop on mesh screens over charcoal, rather than on a butane stove, which he says will destroy the aroma. He then packs the dried stigmas into plastic bags for delivery to the buyers.

By the time the harvest is at an end Leonardo and his family and friends will be exhausted. Although saffron is only one part of the life of Membrilla, its unusual demands have, for generations, created a bond and a sense of community that make its sons and daughters loath to leave for the big city. They tend to stay on and rear their own families here.

The last Sunday in October is the Fiesta of the Saffron Rose, and people from all over the region flock to Consuegra. In a salute to the past, a windmill restored by the government to grind a symbolic bit of flour rotates majestically while a Dulcinea is selected to be queen of the pageant, and Don Quixote and Sancho Panza strut about in full costume. Presiding as hostess is a national television personality. There are parades and contests, while dancers, singers and musicians from many parts of Spain entertain with folk dancing and beloved old songs.

But major changes may be coming to this cottage industry. Much of the finest saffron grown in La

Women of the Quijote y Sancho dance group, sporting gaily striped stockings, celebrate the saffron harvest with a lively jota as a jaunty Spaniard, overcome by the merry spirit of fiesta, breaks into his own impromptu version of the traditional dance.

Mancha is bought by an earnest fellow who hopes to revolutionize the production of a crop worth more than $20 million a year to his country. Fernando P. Morillo Casals, manager of General Saffron Company of Spain, accepts only the best stigmas—rich, true red, and roasted over wood or charcoal. Morillo is also a saffron producer in his own right.

He rages over saffron adulteration, fumes at the failure of some growers to roast and store the spice properly, despairs of getting enough saffron and insists there must be a way to ensure a much larger, steadier crop. And Morillo intends to find that way.

But like the noble Don Quixote, Morillo and company president Augustin Escandón sometimes seem to be tilting at windmills. General Saffron has invested more than $5 million in research and development to improve soil, fertilizers, the corm itself, roasting and packing, to combat disease and to determine the ideal moisture content of the cured stigmas. However, the most controversial aspect of the company's program is its attempt to mechanize the techniques of an ancient industry.

On a Saturday afternoon at the General Saffron research station in La Roda, in the middle of saffron country, hundreds of *celemines* slated for picking by the company's brand-new saffron harvesters are being flattened by unusually heavy rains. But the massive harvesters can't operate in the soft mud. With a small fortune in saffron threads dying in the wet earth, Morillo and Escandón and their team of agricultural engineers are dismayed, but unshaken. "For thousands of years nothing has been done to improve saffron or its cultivation," says Morillo. "Without technology we cannot offer a more perfect saffron for less money. We don't have it quite right yet, but almost. . . . This will work."

In the company warehouses, machines using an ingenious series of belts, blowers and cutters do quite a good job of stripping the stigmas. Once perfected, will these harvesters and strippers endanger the profits of individual saffron farmers? "Why should they?" counters Escandón. "There is a much greater demand for saffron than Spain can meet. We will buy all the saffron we can get. Our machines will allow more land to be under cultivation, and the peasants will make more money without such hard work."

Hours later on this rainy Saturday, Leonardo Alvarez and his sons, sopping wet, carry basket after basket of purple blossoms to the table for women who are still hard at work pulling red stigmas out of drenched flowers. Although Leonardo and his friends in Membrilla respect Morillo, the specter of mechanization hangs heavy over all La Mancha. "The machines cannot pick in the rain . . . but we can," Leonardo says with a weary smile. And so, on this night, during this harvest, the saffron pickers of Membrilla have triumphed over the machine.

Saffron and gold surround fresh cod and potatoes in saffron coulis of Jean Louis at Watergate. Dessert is gourmandise of chocolate with saffron and crème anglaise—with gold leaf, reputedly good for digestion.

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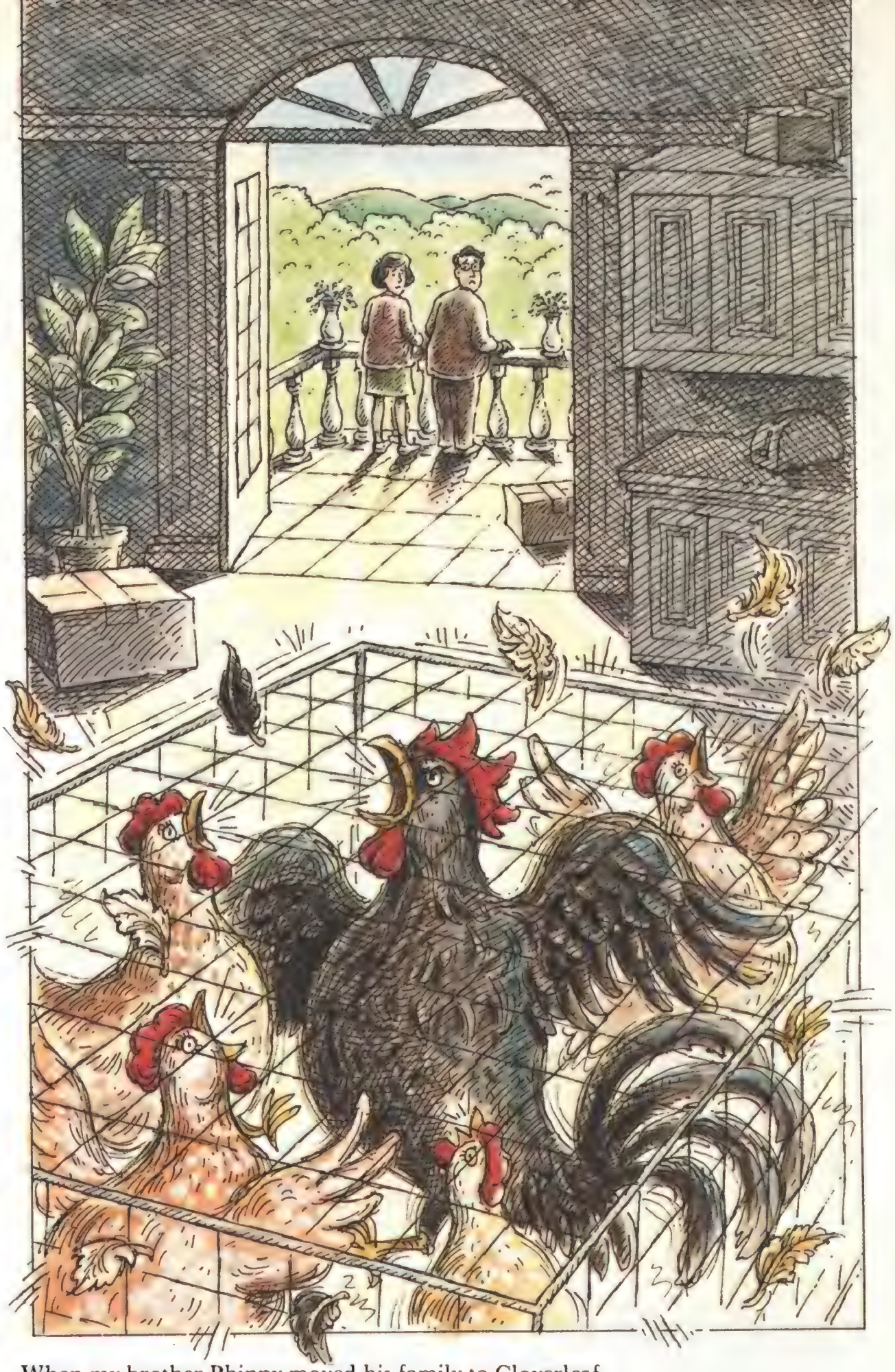
By Olmstead Hill

When the cock crew, the neighbors started to sue

Roto Rooster's doodle-doo didn't do at all in the suburbs —threatening to do him in



When my brother Phinny moved his family to Cloverleaf Circle, he brought his chickens with him, of course.

When my oldest brother, Phinny (only the names have been changed to protect the innocent), moved his family from Ironwork Avenue to Cloverleaf Circle, he brought his chickens with him, of course.

For about as long as anyone can remember, chickens have been something of a trademark for Phinny in his married state. (Previous to that, in bachelorhood, his trademark had been reading maps and batting rocks with a broomstick.) He had even been known to go on short vacations accompanied by his chickens, so no one was surprised to see his little flock joining him for the move into the stately, high-ceilinged villa in one of the best residential sections of Greenfields, Connecticut, within easy yuppie range of Manhattan.

"You've heard of poor white trash," he commented as he surveyed his new domain, complete with old poultry. "Well, we're middle-class trash."

Phinny—also sometimes known to family and friends by his real name, Phineas—has, from his tenderest youth, navigated through life with a curious personal mix of erudition, elegance and eccentricity, defying convention with such grace that whatever course he decides to take along the way not only seems reasonable and right for him at the moment, but usually makes others wonder why they haven't done the same thing themselves.

One of the rare exceptions was the decision to bring the chickens to Cloverleaf Circle.

When Phinny and Marie left New York City and located in Greenfields, their first home was an old and comfortably ramshackle Yankee farmhouse located on Ironwork Avenue, a slightly less desirable section of town. It came complete with a well, a senile wooden barn and a band of wandering raccoons who broke into the garbage with proprietary regularity. One thing rapidly led to another, and before anyone could say Jack Robinson

Illustrations by Larry Ross

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or Rumplestiltskin, what had to happen happened: poultry. To the young math major and geophysicist, the idea of having a coop on their land seemed only logical; to the modestly paid husband and father of two ravenous boys, the prospect of saving money on grocery bills was welcome; to the gourmet, the vision of fresh eggs on the breakfast table was lusciously pleasant. In short, Phinny and Marie got chickens. And a rooster. Or, rather, roosters. They came and they went with the years, the little devils, but the one who became famous, the author of the Great Greenfields Rooster Row, was Roto.

Roto was his name, Roto Rooster, and a fine, upstanding, conscientious, macho imperialist he was, too, faithfully carrying out all those duties that the Maker had intended for roosterdom. Morning to night, he strutted and pecked and flapped and disciplined his ladies, keeping them in line lest they get any harebrained ideas about liberation or whatnot. He crowed a lot, too. That's part of the deal of being a rooster: you've got to keep on crowing all the time if you're worth your spurs.

In retrospect, it looks like Roto took his work too seriously. It was his understanding of the job that he had to crow not just morning to night, but *before* morning to night. In fact, he was convinced that he made the morning happen as he stood there boldly arching his neck in the pitch black at 4 A.M. Summoned the sun, did Roto Rooster.

That might have been OK on Ironwork Avenue, where folks are folks, but at Cloverleaf Circle it turned out to be another kettle of fish. To coin a phrase.

As sometimes happens, adversity began to stalk when Phinny started earning more money—the geophysical racket was in pretty good shape a few years back—and Marie opened the real estate pages to find an offer she couldn't afford to refuse. The result was a villa on Cloverleaf Circle.

"Gee, Baby, I haven't slept in a room this big since the Army, and then there were 50 other guys in it," Phinny said on their first night in their new house, his voice positively echoing from the distant walls. A few hours later, another voice echoed from the garden: Roto Rooster, punching in. Marie and Phinny rolled over and drifted back to sleep. Now they *really* felt like they were home.

Trouble was, there was a next-door neighbor. There always is, isn't there? This one had lost his contact with the animal world. Or was it his wife?

I'm a little bit rusty on my paleoethnology just now, but I'm still pretty certain that cavemen (and cavewomen —and cavepersons, too) would have been scared right off their rupestrian

Roto faithfully carried out all duties the Maker intended for roosterdom.

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engravings by the buzz of a chain saw, while sleeping peacefully through dinosaur grunts or even a pterrible ptumult of pterodactyls. Good King Henry VIII of England wasn't bothered a whit, I'll parry, by peacock shriekings or ass brayings as he gorged and tilted, and terminated wives with extreme prejudice—but he would have scrambled up the Tower of London at the sound of a weary two-stroke lawn mower.

Am I being clear? The point I am trying to make is that men and beasts have traditionally hung around together, coexisting in a propinquity that implied a shared recognition of one another's biological kinship. You might even call it something like harmony, if it weren't for their also mutually shared penchant for eating one another when the occasion presented itself. Luckily for us good guys, the formerly mutual nutrition has become pretty much of a one-way street now, thanks to our clever idea of domesticating as much as we can of the animal kingdom.

But from time to time, you can't help wondering if our domestication of the beasts and our engineering of the ecology haven't gone a bit too far. "Nature doesn't stand a chance here," admiringly remarked an Austrian friend who had taken it into his head to leave Vienna behind in favor of Phoenix, Arizona. At Cloverleaf Circle, asses, peacocks and pterodactyls have been supplanted by a ceaseless roar from the Connecticut Thruway, the pitiless blare of Amtrak locomotive horns and the overhead passage of Messrs. Pratt & Whitney. Not to mention the lawn mowers.

Maybe we just get the noises we all deserve, and tolerate what we feel at home with. Homo sapiens in America today will surround himself with all manner of plangent household instruments, even wiring his dwelling for Muzak, but where chickens, ducks, geese or cows are concerned, he'd rather have them in pretty filets, under plastic. Somewhere out there, though, lurking behind fences where the boning, fileting and plasticking processes haven't yet begun, the animal kingdom is still around, soldiering on.

That was how Phinny saw it, anyway, and he preferred to maintain a little bit of contact by keeping half a dozen chickens. And a rooster, of course. Speak of chickens, you've got to speak of roosters. Elementary. Good old roosters: the bosses, the *capos*, the cocks of the walk, nature's alarm clocks, leaders of a well-kept flock, the original strutters and fretters, symbols of pride and prosperity and unquestioned principles. No self-

For years, writer Olmstead Hill has lived in France, a proud land with a rooster for its national symbol.

Roto was convinced that he made morning happen by crowing at 4 A.M.

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doubt with the rooster. Little wonder that the French have adopted him as their national incarnation. Weather vanes in the form of tin effigies of Chanticleer, *le coq gaulois,* still adorn steepletops throughout the country, and when a Frenchman wants to demonstrate his pride for winning a soccer match or a big contract, he (figuratively) "pushes a cocorico," which is the way "cock-a-doodle-doo" translates into French.

Pushing cock-a-doodle-doos was what Roto did best, and that's what started all the fuss at Cloverleaf Circle.

The lightning struck without warning. One early morning last July, a squad car from the Greenfields Police Department glided silently into the villa's driveway, and a robust young officer strode up to the door, clinking and clanking his revolver, handcuffs, badge and loose change. The neighbors had complained, he said, about, ah, a rooster. He did his best to maintain a virile composure, but one had the distinct impression that he would much rather be somewhere else, shooting at robbers.

The next day, Marie made the papers. There it was, in the "Police Blotter" section of the *Greenfields Hour*: woman cited for noisy roosters. There was only one rooster, of course, but Roto would probably have been proud to know that he counted for two or more.

Marie got stubborn.

I hadn't mentioned this before, but my sister-in-law has a stubborn streak in her. Family folklore attributes it to French-Canadian ancestors who had to hardscrabble it for several generations up in Minnesota before they struck it rich by forming an alliance with the fabulous wealth and fresh farm eggs of our family. When she got stubborn, a delicious frisson of foreboding swept over the entire clan. Marie intransigent is something of a family monument.

"Hey, Reagan ought to use her against the Nicaraguans or Khadafy," suggested boy number two in a brief moment home from fishing. "That neighbor's minor-league stuff. He doesn't stand a chance."

Marie had already pretty much memorized the deed to the house, and knew that it contained a restrictive covenant outlining how chickens were to be housed. She also soon had in her possession a letter from the Greenfields Department of Code Enforcement, reading: "This is to certify that Building Zone regulations do not in any way regulate or prohibit the keeping of animals." Drawing upon the

Trouble was, there was a next-door neighbor who had lost his contact with the animal world.

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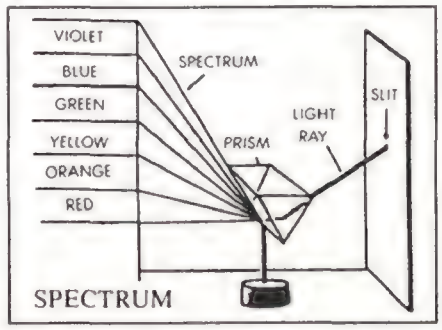

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methodical manner of her old secretarial days, she went out and canvassed the neighbors, door to door. (Marie had worked for a big-time New York politico in Rockefeller Center, and knew a thing or two about getting things done pronto.) Of the ten nearest householders, nine found the chickens charming.

"Especially the Greek families who live over the wall," Marie explained, before adding an ominous, crypto-legal conclusion: "Only the complainants complained."

At the reference desk of the Greenfields Public Library, she researched the city ordinances for noise codes. The law was very clear, she found: at night, an emitter's emissions could not exceed 45 decibels; during the day, 55. All right, then, on to the next step: Marie asked Phinny to bring some of his geophysical gear home from the shop and take some measurements, just to see where they stood. Over the next several days, rosy-fingered Eos, had she been paying attention, could have spotted Phinny stumbling around the backyard with a sound-level meter, waiting for Roto to do his thing. He did, and what he offered gave little comfort.

"It turns out the black rooster was the damnedest noisiest critter ever," Marie admitted with chagrin. "He registered 98 at a yard and 71 at the property line."

Phinny put rather a better face on things, drawing up an impressive report entitled "'Roto' Sound Pressure Level (SPL) Measurements," in which he insidiously led the reader toward a comparison between cock-a-doodle-doo and Muzak.

"Average SPL (5 measurements) of the bird in the coop," he wrote, "is 71 dB measured at the property line. According to the SPL Meter Owner's Manual, a normal conversation has an SPL of 65 dB. A moderately elevated voice level produces an SPL of 71 dB.

"If the 71 dB SPL at the property line is extrapolated to the dwelling in question (about twice the distance from the coop to the property line), the inferred SPL is 61 dB. This level is equivalent to background music, according to the Owner's Manual."

In sum, then, listening to Roto (average crow, three to four seconds) was approximately like riding an elevator. Phinny should have been a lawyer. The neighbors were still unmoved, though. The complainants contin-

ued complaining and, morning after morning, a wide selection of different officers of the peace glided into Cloverleaf Circle at the wheels of their brightly caparisoned, thousand-horsepower squad cars with the caged-off backseats (looking not unlike so many mobile chicken coops).

"We're going to court with this one," exclaimed Bryan William Jennings jubilantly. "Full jury—the works! This is going to be *fun*."

Jennings (that's a lawyerly pseudonym, in case you were wondering) was the attorney brought into the melee. Yes, that had to happen, too. I told you: Marie had gotten stubborn. Over the next several weeks, Jennings enjoyed himself with legal stuff pertaining to poultry, and I could well imagine him researching, splitting hairs and boning up on arcane precedents, happily muttering *res ipsa loquitur* under his breath. A good chicken case is almost as much fun as a big debentures-and-indentures apportionment procedure, once you get into it. He applied for and was granted a postponement of the court date for the Roto affair. More study was required, and perhaps even more postponements. You never know with rooster litigation.

It was then that an entirely new noise—the sound of Jennings' meter ticking—miraculously turned Marie's stubbornness into budgetary dread. Faced with an enterprising attorney's bill, she gasped in horror and was washed by an uncustomary wave of doubt: Was she right, after all, to be pursuing principle so unremittingly at the expense of family funds? This Roto bird was getting to be downright expensive. How far could it all go?

Faced with existential questions of this sort, Marie always reacts the same way: she researches. Now it was time to research Jennings. Or rather, his trade in general. Luckily for everyone concerned, she had another attorney friend, Amanda, who was willing to part with a few well-considered professional guidelines over the phone:

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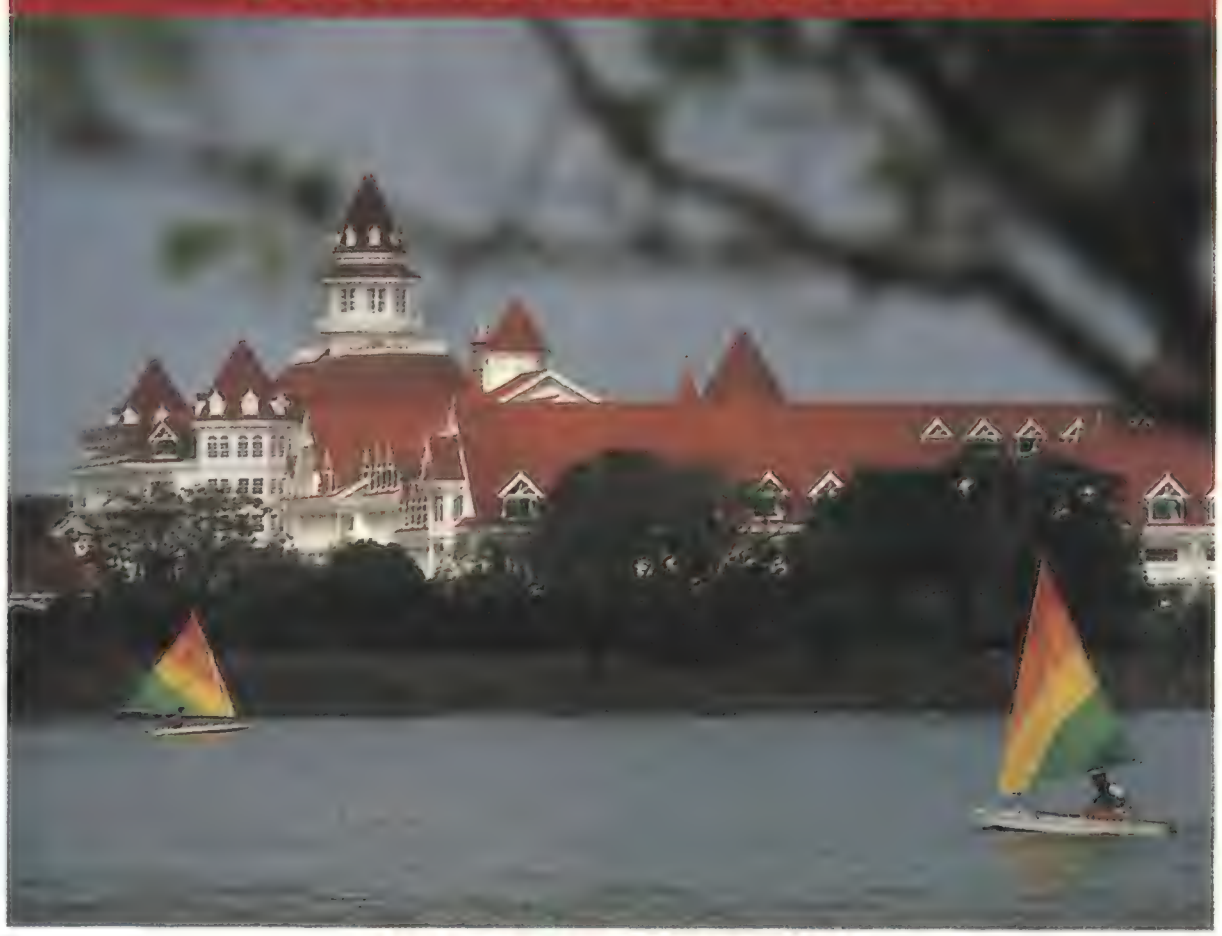

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lawyers don't usually charge top rates for pioneer work, ran the basic thrust of her opinion (presumably delivered with a straight face) and from what she could tell, chicken cases didn't seem to be Jennings' specialty. Perhaps it would be a good idea to negotiate a top fee.

Marie cut bait. No more postponements, thanks just the same, she said to Jennings, and made herself ready to go to court: stockings, Gucci pumps, the Hermès foulard from Cousin Mathilde and the red attaché case from the days when she worked in the Big Apple. Between the drug cases and the drunken drivers, high fashion and Roto provided colorful relief for the frequenters of Greenfields Munic-

In the library Marie researched the city ordinances for noise codes.

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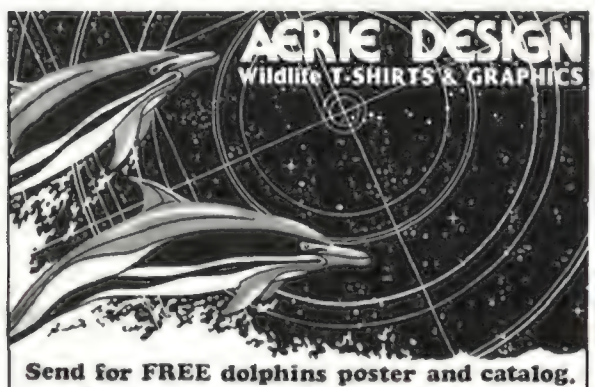

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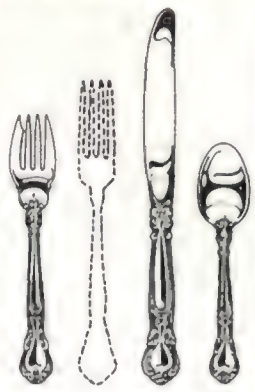

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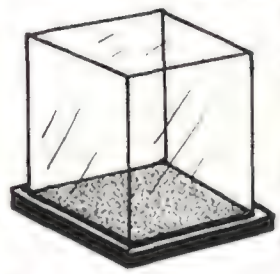

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For days, Phinny stumbled around the backyard with a sound-level meter.

ipal Court. Marie triumphed, of course. Marie always triumphs. The charge was quickly dismissed.

Normally, the story ought to have ended right there, with Jennings jubilant and Marie vindicated, but that would be underestimating the complexity of neighborly relations—and a writer's loathing for anticlimax.

Phinny started worrying. They had won because their deed clearly indicated that penned chickens were permitted on Cloverleaf Circle—but that concerned only the criminal statutes. What about a *civil* suit? What if the

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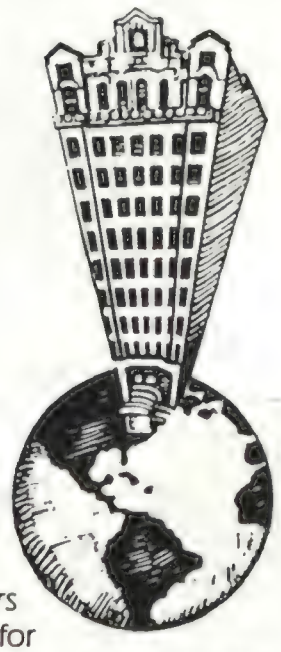

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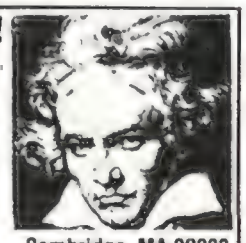

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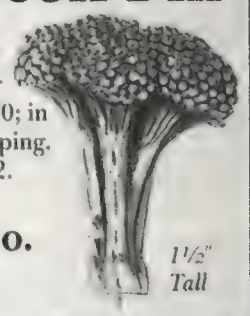

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neighbors charged them with damage to health and marriage? Those sound-level meter readings were right there in Phinny's report, clear as day. Even categorized as akin to elevator music, they peaked right off the noise code. Phinny had moved the coop farther away from the complainants even before the court appearance, but it still made little appreciable difference in Roto's contravention of the law. Something had to be done.

"I couldn't face doing anything ordinary with the noisy beast," Marie said when it was all over. "I even called a taxidermist and found out that his fee would be $95 to stuff him. But then I realized I wouldn't be able to face him the rest of my life."

Torn between admiration for their cantankerous fowl and the prospect of endless years of litigation, Marie and Phinny heaved a collective sigh and gave Roto away. Finally, it appeared, they had surrendered to convention. Next thing you know, they'd be getting a disposal unit or wiring their place for Muzak. But no.

"About six weeks ago," Marie wrote me to explain the final happy denouement of the Great Greenfields Rooster Row, "a farmer at the other end of town who had heard of our travails let it be known that he had a quiet rooster. A banty. The boys went over to fetch the fellow, and damned if he isn't the quietest crowing rooster you've ever heard. He has quite a time of it disciplining our full-sized hens, but he's managing."

A few months later, Phinny, Marie and Roto made the big time. The "Police Blotter" item about the woman being cited for noisy roosters, photocopied straight from the *Greenfields Hour*, was chosen as the cover of a journal put out by the E. E. Cummings Society. Poets understand about things like joy and pain and destiny and transcendence and roosters.

The new rooster was a quiet banty. "He has quite a time of it," Marie wrote, "disciplining our full-sized hens."

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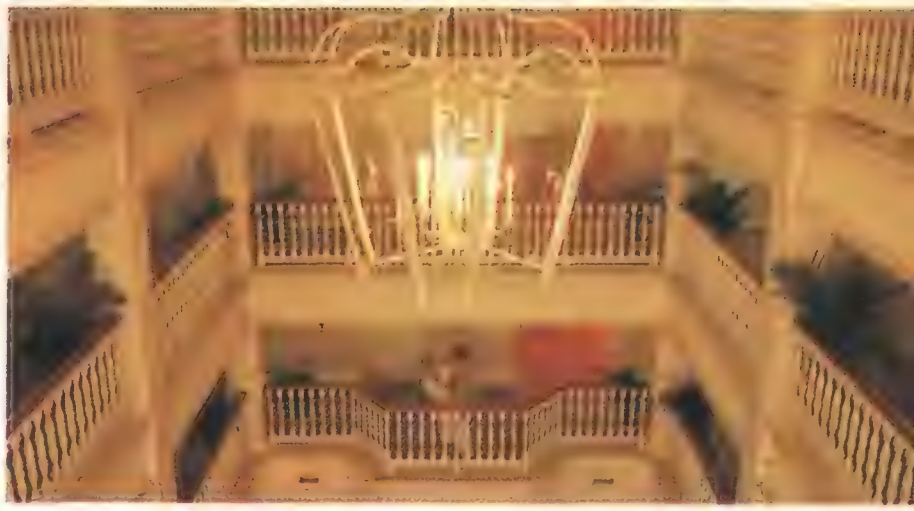

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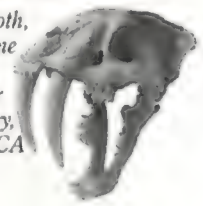

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Book reviews

The Life of My Choice
Wilfred Thesiger
Norton, $25

Wilfred Thesiger, the last of the world's old-school explorers, was born in a mud hut that served as the British Legation in Addis Ababa 78 years ago. As a small boy, awestruck, he watched Ethiopia's royalist armies returning from a triumphant slaughter, led by chiefs in jeweled crowns and lion skins, horses draped with silks and the bloodstained cloaks of the slain enemy, slaves banging on kettledrums, and captive generals in chains. "I believe that day implanted in me a life-long craving for barbaric splendour, for savagery and colour," Thesiger recalls. It also left him with a "distaste for the drab uniformity of the modern world." Even today, Thesiger resents cars, abominates airports and flinches at the very sound of an engine.

Thus *The Life of My Choice* describes a dogged pursuit of the exotic by a man determinedly out of sync with his times. And this book doesn't tell the half of it. Thesiger provides only a perfunctory summary of the wanderings that have made his name venerated among travelers—the crossing of Arabia's forbidding Empty Quarter, his years in the marshes of Iraq, and trekking in northwest Asia (the subject of his three classics: *Arabian Sands, The Marsh Arabs* and *Desert, Marsh and Mountain*, as well as a stunning collection of photographs, *Visions of a Nomad*).

The Life of My Choice focuses instead on prerevolutionary Ethiopia, a land that sounds every bit as benighted as the scarred and famine-wracked Ethiopia of today. Thesiger, however, having spent his childhood there as the son of Britain's Minister Plenipotentiary, describes it fondly: the reek of burning cow dung; notables on muleback, surrounded by armed mobs of slaves and retainers; packs of savage dogs howling through the streets of Addis Ababa; debtors and creditors wandering around chained together; beggars with a hand or foot chopped off for theft; and corpses hanging from the gibbet, their legs torn away by hyenas.

At school in England, Thesiger was a misfit, although he was grateful that Eton (where his classroom dated back to 1443) gave him a "lasting respect for tradition and veneration for the past." As soon as he finished Oxford he returned to Ethiopia for a six-month expedition among the murderous Danakil tribesmen. They were a cheerful bunch, says Thesiger admiringly, "not affected by the boredom which weighs so heavily today on our urban civilization."

As a member of the Sudan Political Service, he was a less-than-zealous colonial official. He spent much of his time roaming on camelback and trekking from his base aboard a paddle steamer, dealing with official correspondence by tossing most of it overboard. No believer in the colonial creed of spreading enlightenment among the natives, he maintains that Western innovations disrupt tribal lives. So much for aid programs. So much for conservation, too; Thesiger hunted big game, notching up 70 lions, harpooning hippos and blasting away at crocodiles for target practice.

His talents were well employed in the World War II Abyssinian campaign, though, in which he fought to defeat the Italian invaders and restore Emperor Haile Selassie to his throne, and in behind-the-lines raiding against Gen. Erwin Rommel's desert forces in Libya.

Unlike earlier adventurers who sought geographic knowledge or served some grand purpose—expanding an empire or spreading Christianity—Thesiger wandered for his own satisfaction, less interested in terrain or discoveries than in challenge, hardship and danger. Above all, he sought comradeship among people who knew no world other than their own. He laments that such isolation no longer exists—his Rashid tribesmen lit fires by striking a dagger against a piece of flint; now they watch the news on TV. One of his life's rewards, he writes, is "to have been there just in time."

But he was late at least once. In 1962,

I found myself bouncing in a truck through Yemen with fellow correspondent Kim Philby, the British spy, shortly before he defected to Moscow. We were heading for Sanaa to report on a revolution that had pried open Yemen's long-sealed borders. "My father [St. John Philby, who with Thesiger was one of the great desert explorers] would have hated to see us," Philby said. "He never managed to get into this country, and here we are riding around like bloody tourists." By the time Thesiger got to Sanaa 15 years later, the old walled city was readying itself for a Sheraton hotel, complete with nightclub and tennis courts.

David Lancashire
Globe and Mail, Toronto

A Mind of Her Own: The Life of Karen Horney
Susan Quinn
Summit Books, $22.95

Sigmund Freud has been credited with the question men often ask in frustration or despair: "What does a woman want?" Perhaps he should have consulted Karen Horney, first a disciple of Freudian psychoanalysis, later a rebel and a distinguished analyst in her own right.

From her earliest years she challenged authority—father, professors, God, even Freud and his devotees. Germany in 1885, the year of her birth, was a man's world and Karen refused to accept the inferior status assigned to her. Her youthful views of life darkened her perspective: at home she saw an unhappy mother and a dominating but, as a seaman, often-absent father; at medical school she was in a male bastion where she learned to downplay her intelligence in order to survive patronizing instructors. She embraced the dynamic new science of psychoanalysis, and went on to establish teaching institutes and a private practice.

Susan Quinn read Horney's diaries, letters and papers, and interviewed her three daughters as part of the extensive research for *A Mind of Her Own*, which traces the development of psychoanalysis from its beginnings through its move to America and the schism between Freudians and non-Freudians.

The author shows how Horney's search for love and acceptance spilled over into all the roles she played. She wished for a religious faith—not the intellectual dogma of her stern Lutheran father, but an emotionally satisfying experience. Not finding it, she turned to friendship and love. When love failed, she turned to work.

Quinn depicts Horney, the student, as already strong and independent. When she was refused admission to a dissecting class she responded that she would dissect herself and that it probably would be more interesting.

As an adolescent she fantasized about the ideal friend or lover who would never disappoint her. Married to Oskar Horney, she soon learned that once again she had placed too much hope in another person. Their marriage evolved into a relationship that resembled today's permissive "open" marriage.

Horney's success as a psychoanalyst must be attributed in part to her style that made use of both analogy and anecdote. She compared the psychoanalyst to an archaeologist who assumes the existence of valuable documents as he excavates a buried city. She often lec-

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tured, explaining the psychoanalytic method: the patient must acknowledge his associations; the analyst and patient together must take down the wall (resistance) to let out the animals (unconscious instincts).

A Mind of Her Own is an apt title, for it was the application of her own intellect and emotions that freed Horney from Freud's school of female psychology. For a time she accepted his views of female inferiority with its well-known jargon—penis envy, womb hysteria, castration complex. Her awareness that Freudian female psychology was only an offshoot of male psychology—to be expected in a male-oriented culture—came when she experienced childbirth. The dawning of female pride and Horney's awareness that femininity is good, that "different" does not mean "inferior," obviously moved Susan Quinn. Her telling of the glowing moment is sure to move female readers.

The 14 papers concerned with female development that Horney wrote in 13 years would have guaranteed her a high rank in the annals of psychoanalysis, but she was not finished. In 1932 she left the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute and went to Chicago to become associate director of the new Institute for Psychoanalysis. A split between the orthodox and the more eclectic psychoanalysts was partly responsible for Horney's move to New York in 1934. A similar split there led to her departure from the New York Analytic Institute and her establishment of the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis.

Further quarreling eventually put Horney on her own, and gave her time for private interests and private patients. She visited Japan where she found spiritual solace in Zen. She was happy there, unaware that cancer was already destroying her. She died on December 4, 1952, knowing that funds had been raised to create the Karen Horney Clinic in New York.

Although Susan Quinn's admiration for Horney shines through, she does not hesitate to point out the unattractive traits of this dedicated, driven woman. Horney's daughters felt there was not enough time and love for them, that their mother expected too much of them. The talented psychoanalyst, who resolved problems for so many others, never found the love she searched for.

Geraldine R. Foty
Massachusetts book reviewer

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Additional reading

Horizons (p. 10)

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Special August exhibits and events

National Museum of American Art
Lucas Samaras: Objects and Subjects 1969-1986 (August 12-October 16) Sculpture, photography, painting, assemblage by a multitalented, unorthodox artist.

Renwick Gallery
Clay Revisions: Plate, Cup, Vase (through September 5) See *Highlights continued* (p.132).

National Museum of American History
Frank Lloyd Wright: In the Realm of Ideas (through September 30) Artifacts, models, Usonian Automatic House.

National Portrait Gallery
Polaroid Portraits (August 27-December 4) Remarkable ways Polaroid film has been used to make portraits.

National Museum of Natural History
"The Incomparable," second-largest finished diamond in the world (SMITHSONIAN, May 1988), will be on view in the Gem Hall August 1-September 13 joining two recent acquisitions: the DeYoung red diamond and the American Golden Topaz, the world's largest faceted gemstone (see *Around the Mall*, p. 16).

National Museum of African Art
Images from Bamum: German Colonial Photography at the Court of King Njoya, Cameroon, West Africa, 1902-1915 (through September 6) Life in colonial Cameroon.

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Art of India: Painting and Decorative Objects (through December 31) Stylistic and thematic examples.

National Air and Space Museum
Fly-by-Night (Thursdays through August, 6-9 P.M.) Special demonstrations, tours and lectures for the whole family.

National Zoological Park
Sunset Serenades Free outdoor concerts at Lion/Tiger Hill (6:30-8 P.M.).
August 4: Russell Carter Quartet.
August 11: Andean folk songs.

Cooper-Hewitt Museum (New York)
Paris Opera on Stage: Designs, Costumes, Jewels (through September 25) Colorful costumes, set designs.

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Exhibition catalogs

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Frank Lloyd Wright: In the Realm of Ideas (paper, $24.95; cloth, $42.50)
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A Cool Highland Fling et al with John Eaton (August 17; 8 P.M.) Piano concert of popular songs by Gershwin, Berlin.
Tribute to Bebop: Courtyard Concert with Allen Houser Quintet (August 24; 7 P.M.) Jazz of Gillespie, Parker, Davis.

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Cleveland, Ohio (August 28-December 11) *The Long Road Up the Hill: Blacks in the United States Congress, 1870-1983*, African-American Museum of Cleveland.
Columbia, South Carolina (August 13-September 25) *Coverlets: New Threads in Old Patterns*, McKissick Museum.
Farmington, New Mexico (August 14-September 12) *The Santa Fe Trail: Photographs by Joan Myers*, Farmington Museum.

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Since that time, the high quality of Benedictine and B&B has never varied. In honor of this tradition of excellence, each generation of the Le Grand family has proudly put their initials—A.L.G.—on each bottle of their liqueur.

BENEDICTINE & BRANDY

In the 1930's, this historic drink took on a whole new life, when a New York bartender had the inspiration to float Benedictine over Brandy. The result was so dazzling that my grandfather was compelled to bottle it in France, blending our Benedictine with the finest French cognac. Today, our own generation is making B&B the symbol of a new renaissance in gracious living.

B&B AND BACCARAT

B&B is civilized elegance, and the renowned artisans at Baccarat have captured that essence in a stunning crystal decanter. Its sculptural form mirrors the design of our B&B bottle, which is to say our liqueur *inspired* the Baccarat artisans.

ENJOY THE ART OF LINGERING—WITH B&B.

Once you try B&B in the traditional snifter (it's also wonderful in coffee), I am sure you will want to linger over it, and savor it, long into the night. B&B liqueur. Once you've experienced it, you will truly know and enjoy the art of lingering.

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The perfect snifter is tulip shaped, narrowing at the top to enhance the bouquet of the spirits. If you return the coupon below, we'll send you a pair of snifters for just $3.00. We'll also include information on how to get the Baccarat decanter at a most advantageous price.

To receive your pair of classic snifters, just send $3.00 (Texas residents add sales tax) to: B&B Liqueur, P.O. Box 227084, Dallas, TX 75222-9990

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1. Have you purchased a bottle of B&B in the last 6 months? ____ Yes ____ No
2. What other cordial or liqueur do you drink?_____
3. Sex: Male ____ Female ____
4. Age: Under 25 ____, 25-34 ____, 35-44 ____, 45-54 ____, 55 and over ____.

To send a gift of B&B Liqueur anywhere in the U.S., call **1-800-BE-THERE.** Void where prohibited.

SMA

Monsieur Alain Le Grand,
Le Directeur, Benedictine S.A.,
and great, great grandson of Alexandre Le Grand,
Le Fondator de Société Benedictine, 1864.

B&B LIQUEUR

Creativity with ceramics

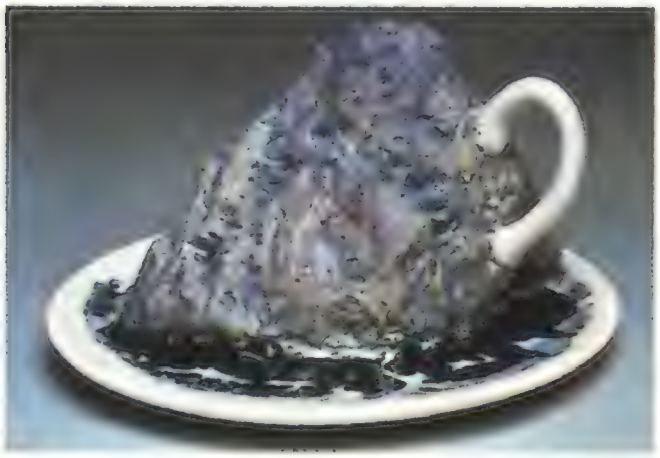
Plate, cup and vase are the subjects, but function has been dismissed as they've been changed into pure art

They are familiar utilitarian forms—the dinner plate, drinking cup and flower vase—but over the years innovative artists have explored these shapes to create objects for contemplation rather than use. Ranging from Expressionist to Constructivist to Surrealist, their ceramic pieces are sometimes dramatic, sometimes whimsical.

The plate has been described as the potter's canvas, but unlike canvas, clay can be sculpted and carved as well as painted and glazed. A cup is generally a vessel to hold liquids, but when the functional requirement is removed, the artist is free to offer a paradoxical interpretation. The bowl of a Robert Arneson cup (top left) is a glazed mountain floating in a saucer of liquid. The vase, too, can be used to explore the relationship of inside to outside.

Seventy-two of these clay works by 26 artists have been gathered together in "Clay Revisions: Plate, Cup, Vase," an exhibit that will be at the Renwick Gallery through September 5. Organized by the Seattle Art Museum, the show is being circulated by the American Federation of Arts.

Sally Scott Maran



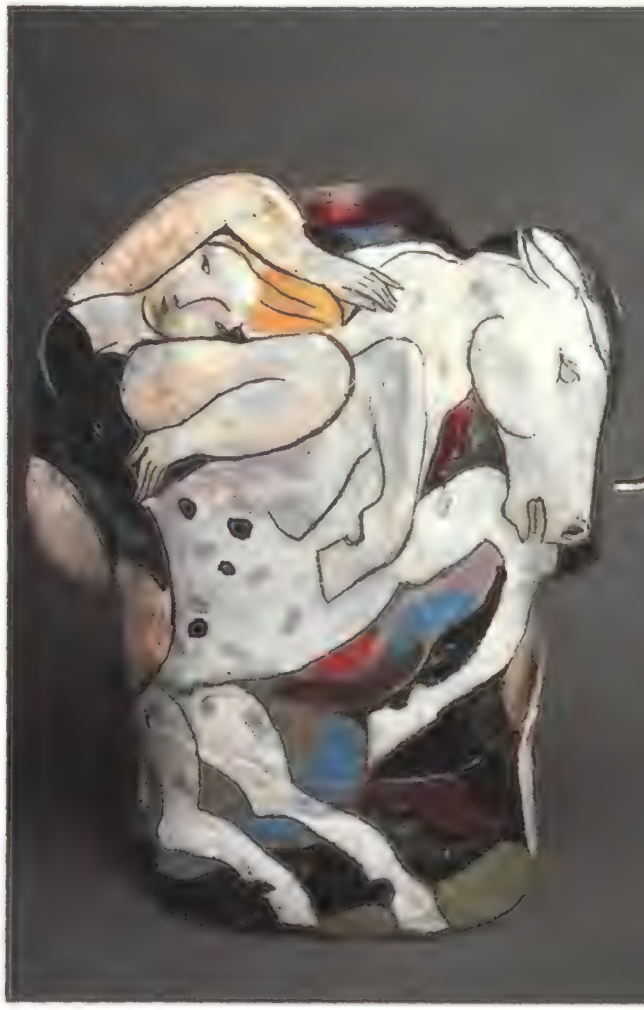
Robert Arneson's *Mountain Cup #18* rises from puddled liquid in the saucer.

Optical illusion of Howard Kottler's *Portrait of a Vase* offers a void as vase.

Checkered Peach Cup by Peter Shire has sturdy alternative to a fragile handle.

The bowl has become a narrow slit in Olga Bravo's footed *Cup and Saucer.*

Tom Rippon's *Miss-Stress #1* is cup as an irritable, teeth-bared early riser.



A swirling horse and figure consume *Hellgate Appaloosa* by Rudy Autio.

Nuclear energy, not foreign oil, is the best way to prevent electricity shortages

Electricity is so vital to our economy and our way of life that a shortage of electricity is unthinkable. Yet some parts of the country are already experiencing brownouts during peak periods of demand. The question is not "Will we run out?" The question is "What price will we have to pay?"

Our electricity demand will outgrow our present supply. It is only a matter of time. Federal planners believe that our current generating capacity may not be enough to supply our peak electrical demand in the 1990s.

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Imported oil: a dangerous fix

The longer we wait to build new coal and nuclear plants, the more we will have to depend on oil. Using more oil plants would increase our foreign oil imports, worsen our trade deficit, and make America even more dangerously dependent on foreign countries for crucial energy.

More nuclear plants needed

Nuclear energy is already America's second largest source of electricity after coal. By reducing the use of foreign oil to make electricity, nuclear plants have saved America $105 billion in foreign oil payments since 1973. Nuclear plants have also helped cut consumer electric bills by over $60 billion.

Nuclear energy reduces America's dependence on foreign oil, not only at electric power plants, but wherever electricity replaces oil. It supplies a large part of the electricity that our economy needs to prosper.

If you'd like more information on making America more energy independent, write to the U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, P.O. Box 66103, Dept. SH06, Washington, D.C. 20035.

Information about energy America can count on

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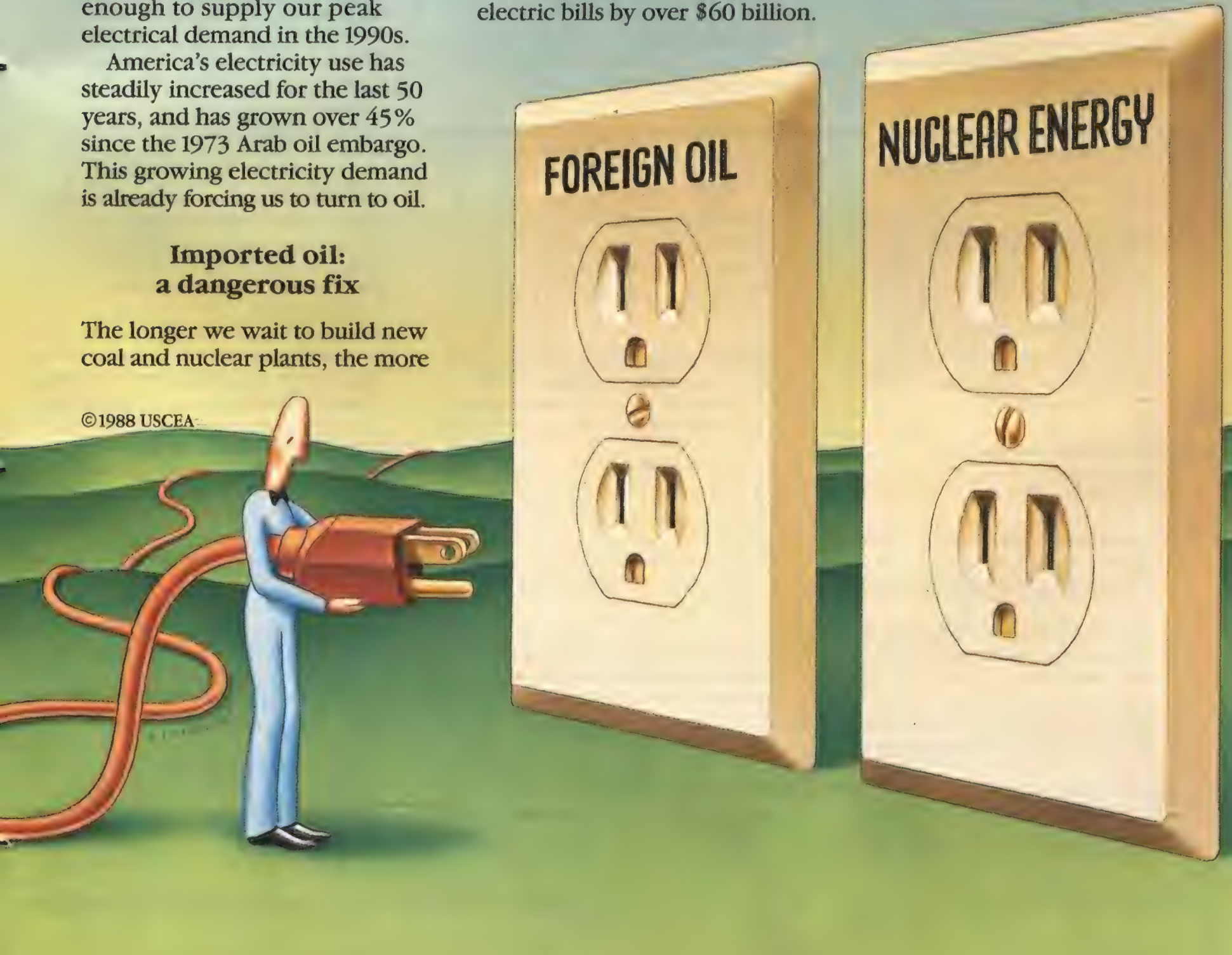

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NEW By the Beautiful Sea—19th-century New England Resorts August 19-26: Sail the *Nantucket Clipper* to Woods Hole, Nantucket and Newport. Celebrate the Marine Lab's 100th anniversary.

Pacific Northwest August 23-September 3: An introduction to the natural beauty and cultural wealth of Seattle, Vancouver, Victoria and Puget Sound.

National Air and Space Weekend September 9-11: Explore air and space travel through tours and lectures with museum staff.

NEW White Mountains of New Hampshire September 12-21: A hiking adventure for outdoor enthusiasts.

West by Rail September 23-26 or 26-29: Travel by private, restored train from Denver to San Francisco, or vice versa.

California Wine October 2-8: Learn to select, enjoy and evaluate wines from Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino.

Florida Keys October 22-28: Coral reefs, hardwood hammocks and tide pools are studied during a sojourn on Big Pine Key with marine biologists.

Okefenokee November 1-6: For novice or expert canoeists, discover the beauty of this wildlife refuge near Jacksonville.

Smithsonian Sampler Weekend November 11-13: For *all* ages. Private tours highlight collections at selected museums.

Christmas at the Smithsonian December 2-4: Welcome the holidays with tours, music and festive dining.

Christmas in Asheville December 23-26: Celebrate the holiday at historic Grove Park Inn.

Hawaii January 22-February 3 or February 12-24: Explore the diversity of four islands on this active nature tour.

Florida Springs February 6-10: Canoe the freshwater springs of central Florida and observe the endangered West Indian manatee.

Foreign Study Tours

People's Republic of China Nine unique itineraries, August-October: Study archaeology, decorative arts; visit Nepal and Tibet. Tours for new and repeat China travelers.

European Countryside Programs August-September: Reside in scenic and historic areas of Hungary, Germany or Italy.

NEW Trinity Seminar August 26-September 10: Celebrate Dublin's millennium while residing at historic Trinity College.

European Waterways August 27-September 12: Aboard the *Argonaut*, cruise French rivers, coastal Spain and Portugal. Tour begins in London and ends in Lisbon.

Galápagos August 28-September 9: See the natural wonders of this Pacific island group aboard the M.V. *Santa Cruz*.

Odyssey of Flight September 1-14: Visit aviation museums in Munich and London as well as the Farnborough airshow.

NEW Himalayan Kingdoms September 3-24: Follow an ancient caravan route from Srinagar in the Vale of Kashmir to Ladakh; then fly to Nepal and Bhutan. Includes Delhi.

NEW Burgundy Walk September 8-22: Explore *à pied* the countryside and villages of Burgundy while staying in Autun, Dijon and Vézelay.

Switzerland by Train September 17-29 or October 1-13: Travel through the Alps to mountain villages and cosmopolitan cities.

Sicily September 23-October 6: Study this ancient island crossroad in the Mediterranean.

Rhineland October 4-20: Stay in Heidelberg before cruising the picturesque Rhine and Mosel aboard the M.S. *Europa*, pride of the Rhine River fleet. Tour ends in historic Cologne.

Japan Journey October 9-23: An excellent overview of Japanese culture in Kyoto, Tokyo and the countryside.

Australia-New Zealand October 16-November 8: An intriguing introduction to natural history and culture down under.

NEW Seminar in Egypt October 23-November 9: Lectures at American University in Cairo enhance a four-day cruise that visits ancient sites from Aswan to Luxor.

NEW India Arts and Crafts November 4-26: Unique program focuses on village artisans; also includes trips to Agra, Ahmedabad and Bombay.

NEW Argentina November 6-27: Explore fantastic natural and historical diversity from the wildlife spectacle at Valdés Peninsula to remote parts of the panoramic northwest.

Thailand November 6-24: Enjoy colorful cities, remote villages and archaeological sites in this exotic country.

Smithsonian Christmas: Enjoy the holidays on the tropical island of Fiji or in the warm climate of New Zealand; or celebrate in one of four idyllic European settings including England (Winchester or Canterbury), Austria or Switzerland.

Antarctica and Falkland Islands December 27-January 12: Aboard the M.V. *Society Explorer*, thrill to spectacular scenery, visit research stations, photograph wildlife, learn of historic explorations.

Mesoamerican Study Programs January and February: Mexico or Guatemala.

Backstage London January 1-11: In Europe's theater capital, attend traditional and avant-garde productions, meet performers backstage.

South America Voyage January 6-30: Cruise from Brazil through the Strait of Magellan and Beagle Channel to Puerto Montt, Chile. Includes Iguaçú Falls and Santiago.

NEW Leningrad Arts Seminar January 14-22: An overview of art, architecture, history with visits to the Hermitage and Russian museums. Pre-trip program in Washington features Hillwood's Russian collection.

Kenya-Tanzania Wildlife Safari January 21-February 7: A unique journey to East Africa.

India Wildlife Safari January 22-February 18: Travel by elephant and jeep to observe rare species of birds and animals in India and southern Nepal.

Write Smithsonian National Associates, 1100 Jefferson Drive SW, Washington, DC 20560 or call (202) 357-4700 for tour brochures

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Westin Hotel
Vail, Colorado, September 6-10
Enjoy Vail's Old World style and unmatched beauty during these late-summer learning vacations high in the Rockies.

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Improve your images under the guidance of Smithsonian photographers as you tackle challenging assignments.

Gems and Minerals
Discover a magnificent diversity underfoot and learn about this region's unique geology during lectures and field trips.

Prints from Nature
Create original prints from plants and other natural objects that you'll collect from surrounding mountains and meadows.

Washington, D.C.

Aircraft Restoration, September 18-23
Discover the Smithsonian's Paul E. Garber Facility during in-depth tours and sessions with expert craftsmen who demonstrate the fine techniques of woodworking, fabric covering, doping, painting, corrosion control, metalwork and assembly of vintage aircraft.

Japan: The Shaping of Daimyo Culture 1200-1800, November 2-5
View this magnificent exhibition of Japanese lacquer ware, ceramics, screens, paintings and more at the National Gallery of Art. Take part in a traditional tea ceremony, attend a performance of Noh drama and enjoy illustrated lectures on Japanese art and society in this important period.

Crossroads of Continents, November 2-5
Learn about the history, art and traditional cultures of the Siberian, Aleut, Eskimo and Northwest Coast peoples as you enjoy special tours and lectures that highlight the major exhibition "Crossroads of Continents" at the Museum of Natural History. Drawn from American, Soviet and Canadian collections, this unprecedented display of 500 objects represents cultural change from the Ice Age to the present.

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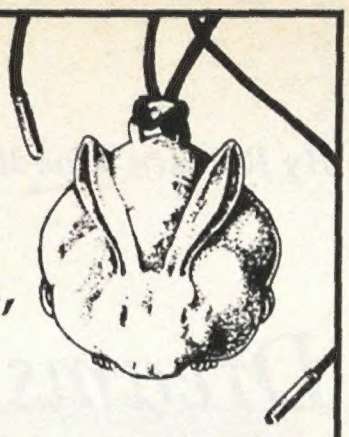

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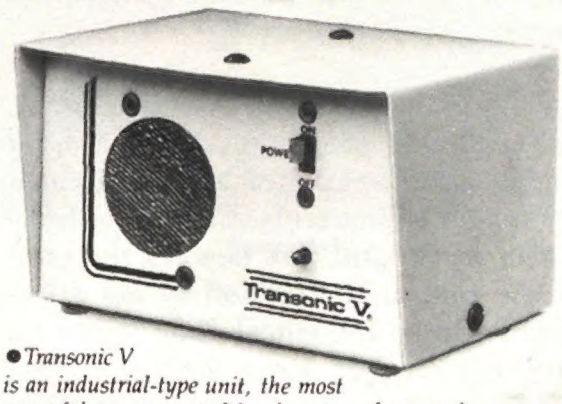

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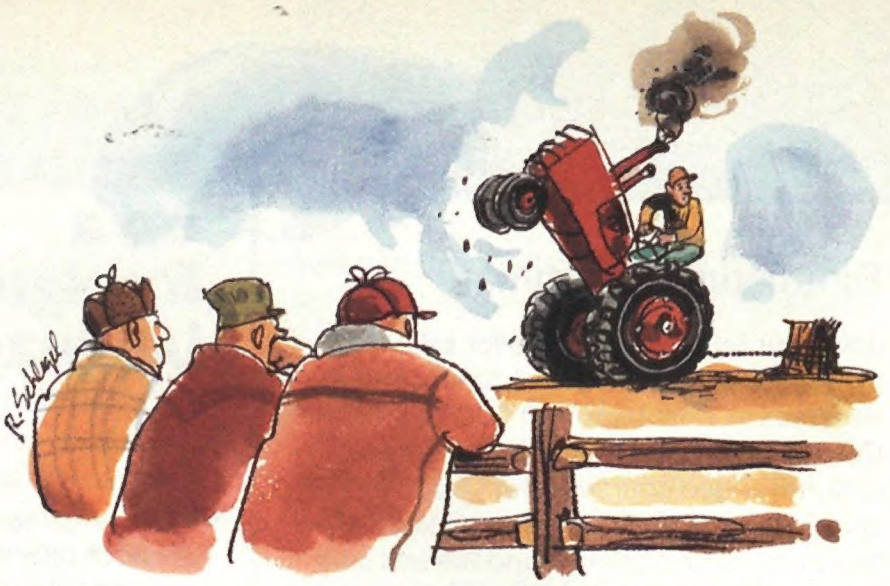
By Richard Woodley

Dreams of glory in four-wheel drive



My boyhood dream was a set of wheels that would take you where regular cars couldn't go—and never get stuck. I was pushing 40 before I could afford my first such vehicle—a four-wheel-drive Jeep Renegade with big "all-terrain" tires.

In those days, before off-road vehicles were owned by everybody over the age of 10, that Renegade was a marvel. Awed by its traction and invincibility, I cruised the wilderness. I lived in the country then, on a steep hill. It snowed a lot. I liked to rumble through the streets of the nearby village looking for people with regular cars stuck in the snow. Masterfully I would hitch up my macho tow chain and pull them out. With the sheer bravado of a Jeep owner, I didn't bother to have my driveway plowed. That first winter I got stuck a lot in my driveway.

Late one night I was driving home in an icy rain. I remember I had bought some chicken parts for supper. Reaching my hill, I smoothly shifted into four-wheel drive, and just beyond the crest of the hill, at the turnoff to my driveway, I turned the wheel. The Jeep kept on going, straight down the hill.

I pumped the brakes. The Jeep did a series of spins and a couple of lazy full circles. The downhill was a mile with a sharp right at the bottom. My panic grew until, on one of the Jeep's rotations, one of my all-terrain front tires caught the ditch and dug in there, deep, saving my life. It was too icy to stand up. On hands and knees I crawled up the hill toward my drive, dragging the brown paper bag of chicken, but somewhere along the way the chicken soaked through the bag and escaped back downhill into the night.

Ten years passed. I still had my Jeep, but when my wife and I bought a small farm, we also bought a riding mower for the lawn. When you are on a lawn tractor for the first time, you feel like you're on a real tractor, so I decided to cut the hayfield with the lawn tractor, too.

Every couple of feet the rotary blades clanged against big hidden rocks. The wheels stuck in ruts. After some hours the solution was for my wife to drive the lawn tractor, while I walked ahead flushing up rocks, now and again getting behind it to push.

I was not unaware of how this must have looked. The field was bordered by the neighborhood road used by local farmers and other rural veterans. Clearly there was nothing to do but buy a real tractor. A tractor can go anywhere. With a tractor, you can pull a Jeep out of a ditch. The tractor I bought was a classic, 30-year-old, red Farmall with massive, deep-cleated rear tires four feet tall. Slung on the back for haying was a sickle-bar mowing rig—gears and belts driving a set of knives that shuttled on a six-foot bar. Talk about fulfillment of boyhood dreams of glory!

Perched high on its metal seat, I cruised our fields, watching those big wheels just roll over rocks and ditches. The sickle bar shivered and clanked but didn't cut anything. A neighbor farmer stopped by to say he could tell I had a few problems—among them dull and broken knives, loose belts, poor alignment, lack of grease.

I let the hay stand temporarily. There are many things tractors can do. They can pull out stumps.

I cut down an apple tree and backed the tractor up to the stump and attached my old tow chain. I cranked up the engine and let out the clutch. For a second or so, the engine chugged normally, but the tractor didn't budge. Neither did the stump. Then the tractor's nose suddenly rose into the air like a 747 leaving the runway. Instinctively I slammed my foot down on the clutch and the nose settled back down.

I diagnosed it immediately. Those big wheels are determined to turn. If they can't propel the tractor forward, and the deep tread won't spin in the dirt like an ordinary tire, and the stump won't come out, the wheels will simply flip the tractor over backward. This view was confirmed by several interested spectators. Everybody knows that with a tractor you face toward the stump and pull by backing away, so you won't flip over.

Winter came and the snow was deep, but now I had a tractor. During a blizzard, I put on my cowboy hat and sheepskin coat and big gloves, and climbed onto the Farmall and headed out. The field had a drainage ditch drifted full of snow. The tractor burrowed into that, burying its small front wheels first until the huge rear wheels sank as well. The engine continued to chug away, but the tractor just sat there—its giant wheels slowly churning.

You can pull a car out of a ditch with a Jeep. You can pull a Jeep out of a ditch with a tractor. But what do you do when the tractor is stuck? You can shut the engine off and go into a panic. I envisioned my Farmall sitting there until the spring thaw, a public monument to rubes, an amusement to neighbors.

Luckily, because of the blizzard, none of my neighbors had driven by yet. Getting a shovel, I desperately dug out the tractor, cranked her up and raced for the seclusion of the barn.

In the spring, with the help of a farmer who kindly made no mention of the tractor tracks leading to the dug pit that had remained visible in the snow for days after the blizzard, I cut the hay with the tractor. I mowed the lawn with the lawn mower. I pulled out stumps with the Jeep. I bought a Pontiac with wheels smaller than the front wheels of the Farmall, and it got me any place I chose to go.

"Still–in a way–nobody sees a flower–really–
it is so small–we haven't time–
and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time."

—Georgia O'Keeffe

Red Poppy, 1927 *Oil on canvas 7" × 9", Private collection, Geneva*

Photography by Malcolm Varon

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE 1887-1986

Dallas Museum of Art · July 31-October 16, 1988
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